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THE RESTORATION OF THE GOSPEL

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY JOSEPH F. SMITH, JR.

Of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles

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TO MY DEAR MOTHER,
WHO LED ME TO THE LAND
OF THE RESTORATION,
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED.

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FOREWORD.

The following chapters on the subject of the *Restoration* are the outcome of an invitation to write, during the winter of 1910-11, a series of lessons for the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association. Chapters two to nineteen, inclusive, were written for the Association and were printed, substantially as they appear in this book, in the *Young Woman's Journal*. Chapters one, twenty, twenty-one and twenty three, were prepared especially for this volume. Chapter twenty-two appeared as an independent article in the *Improvement Era* some years ago.

✓ The brief treatment of the Restoration of the Gospel herewith presented to the public is not intended to be in any wise a history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is at most a story of the Restoration. It presumes at the outset that something has been restored. It relates how this something was restored. Every missionary of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has met these two questions when he has preached abroad the Gospel of the Restoration:—What was restored? How was it restored? These two questions the following chapters attempt to answer in part. They consider the actual restoring of the necessary priesthood and authorities to officiate for God, in God's stead; they consider the organizing of the

Church, of the quorums of the priesthood, of the auxiliary associations, and of community and family life. Indeed, these chapters are essentially the story of the restoration of divine authority and correct organization. With these things restored, it became necessary to set the world right in its knowledge of God, and in its conception of the duties of man, and his relationship to the kingdom of God. But these questions concern another phase of the story of the restoration and must be left to a later book.

It is with pleasure that I acknowledge here my grateful appreciation of the encouragement and assistance given me by my friends. The General Board of the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Associations and the Guide Committee read the original manuscript. Elders Rulon S. Wells and Joseph W. McMurrin, the Journal Committee appointed by the First Presidency, also read and critized the original manuscript. Finally, Elders Charles W. Penrose, George F. Richards, and Joseph F. Smith, Jr., read, by appointment of the First Presidency, the complete manuscript as it was prepared to appear in book form. I wish to thank all these brethren and sisters for their generous assistance and invaluable suggestions. But while these committees have read the manuscript and have passed favorable judgment upon it, it must be remembered that the author alone is responsible for all errors here to be found. Finally, I wish publicly to acknowledge my gratitude to my brother, Dr. John A. Widtsoe, and to my

mother, Mrs. Anna K. Widtsoe, for much valuable help; and to my wife for her untiring devotion and zeal in reading and correcting and perfecting. Were it not for the encouragement of these many friends, I should not dare venture to puth forth the following chapters in book form.

O. J. P. W.

Salt Lake, Utah. Jan. 21, 1912. .



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INTRODUCTION.

Was there any need during the early part of the nineteenth century of the Christian era for a restoration of the Gospel? Was there at that time any need for a re-establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ? These are vital questions that mean everything to the people of the world. If the Gospel, as it was established by the Son of God, remained on the earth from that day until the present, there was no necessity for, and there could not have been, a restoration. If the Church of Jesus Christ remained on the earth intact from the days of the Savior's ministry when He commissioned His Apostles and sent them into all the world to preach the Gospel, until the present day, it could not have been re-established. If the Church did remain, undefiled—the guardian and advocate of the Gospel—then there was no need of the so-called “reformation” of the middle ages. If the Church was taken away from the earth, and the Gospel replaced by another which was a perverted, defiled, and man-made system, nothing short of a restoration would bring back to mankind that which was lost. Protestantism and the “reformation” did not and could not remedy the evil.

That there was a need of a restoration of the Gospel and a re-establishment of the Church, with the accompanying Priesthood and power, is attested both

by the pages of history and the doctrines and practices of the religious world; for these things point unmistakably to the fact of a universal departure from the Gospel and the Church established by the Redeemer. That such a condition would be, was clearly pointed out by many of the ancient prophets, who also foretold the restoration that should take place previous to the second coming of the Son of God. How any intelligent person can read and reflect upon the many events that have taken place since the days of the establishment of the Church by our Lord, to the present time, and not fully realize that there was a universal departure from the true faith, is a mystery. The strife, bloodshed, murders, bigotry and superstition, that prevailed in the name of the Christian religion, point conclusively to a departure from the faith. The pomp, the pride, the improper exercise of authority, the changed ordinances and the weaving of pagan philosophy into the religion of the people, the creation of new offices in the ministry, and a thousand and one other things in the practices and worship of those who professed to be followers of the Lord, prove beyond reasonable question, the departure from the Gospel that has been established by our Savior in the days of his Apostles, and the absolute necessity of a restoration.

For many ages following the departure from the Gospel as it was introduced by the Author of our Salvation, the world was under the bondage of sin.

All mankind, both clergy and laity, were united in the fallacious belief that the canon of scripture was full and complete; and, notwithstanding the predictions of those scriptures to the contrary, had declared that there was to be no more revelation, neither ministering of angels nor other heavenly manifestation of divine will. Such things, said they, were no longer needed and had been done away. The people, surrounded by spiritual darkness, were dependent upon the dead letter or the written word, as that word was interpreted by man-appointed and worldly-taught priests. Men who denied the authority and power of the holy Priesthood had taken honor unto themselves, changing the law and ordinances to suit their own convenience. There was no vision, and the people were perishing because none were sent with authority to teach them the order of heavenly things. The Holy Spirit that was promised the true disciples by the Lord, as a guide into all truth and which should show them things to come, and would testify of the Father and the Son, had been withdrawn from mankind because of iniquity and transgression. Spiritual darkness was supreme. Pernicious superstitions and false traditions possessed the hearts of the people. For a long time, principally during the "dark ages," individuals were forbidden even on pain of death, the sacred and divine right of free thought and action. They were even denied their inherent right to approach the throne of grace, read the scriptures, or give vent to their heartfelt desires before the Lord

in any manner not approved by the ruling power that had fettered all men with its chains. The least expression of free thought, of suspicion, of heretical belief, even if it was without foundation in fact, was sufficient to commit the offending person to the torture of the rack or perchance the burning stake. Thousands upon thousands died martyrs at the hands of bigotry and superstition, wrongfully in the name of the Christian faith. Secret and individual prayers offered in a way not prescribed by the priests of religion who controlled absolutely in such things, were considered a menace to the welfare of the Church. For there was a church; one of great wealth and splendor that held sway over all the Christian world. Rulers of powerful nations paid homage to it, and at times were publicly humiliated by its head whom they had angered, for by him kings were made or dethroned at will, so great was his worldly power. But this church was without divine authority. It had no divinely appointed Priesthood. Its doctrines were perverted, and before it the people bowed in submission in fear and trembling.

This awful state of affairs brought about the "reformation," when the Lord raised up courageous men to shatter these fetters of bondage, that freedom might be given to the people and the way prepared in part for the re-establishment of truth, when the proper time should come. But Luther and the other "reformers" were without the power and authority to act in the name of the Lord. They, them-

selves, interpreting the scriptures according to their human understandings, fell into many grievous errors and established conflicting creeds until the world was filled with churches and with priests who drew near to the Lord with their lips, but were far removed from Him in their practices.

This was the condition of the religious world early in the nineteenth century when the Lord revealed Himself to the youthful prophet, Joseph Smith.

Joseph Smith did not come into the world merely as a reformer of false religious forms and practices. He came in fulfilment of prophecy, as a restorer of the true faith and worship of the Master, and to prepare the way before His second coming. He came to usher in the glorious dispensation of the Fulness of Times; that dispensation of the Gospel spoken of by the prophets of old as the "time of restitution of all things." The time, as Paul said to the Ephesian Saints, when "He [the Lord] might gather together in one all things in Christ both which are in heaven and which are on earth even in Him." He came to organize the Church with the same officers, power, gifts and blessings that it possessed in the primitive days. He came to prepare the way for the millennial reign of universal peace by establishing anew the Holy Priesthood with all its offices and powers—that authority by which men officiate in the name of the Lord and their acts are valid in the heavens. For, unlike the reformers, he was duly commissioned with this authority which he received under the hands of heavenly messengers

who rightfully held it and were sent to bestow it upon his head. Like the ancient prophets, he had the right to point out flagrant and persistent errors in the doctrines of the churches, and the power to teach them the true form of worship. He was commanded of the Lord and commissioned to preach the Gospel and baptize the repentant believer for the remission of his sins. He came as a new witness for the Father and the Son, and testified afresh to all the world that Jesus was the Christ, the only begotten Son of the eternal Father, who came to redeem the world from sin. For he beheld the Father and the Son, and was commanded to bear witness that they live. He shattered the notion which universally prevailed that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, constitute one being, "without body, parts or passions." He taught man that he was formed in the image of the Father, and that the Father and the Son were personages with bodies that were as tangible as man's. He destroyed the falsehood that little children were not redeemed through the blood of Christ without baptism and went to eternal torment if they died without being christened by a minister. He taught the world that infants were without sin. He taught that baptism was for the remission of sins and was immersion in water, and to be valid must be performed by one who was properly commissioned to administer that sacred ordinance. He overthrew the prevalent belief that sprinkling or pouring of water on the head was recognized by the Lord as baptism. He

taught that a man could not be saved without repentance—that confession of belief in the Savior was not enough to save him. He, with others, received the keys of authority held by all the ancient prophets in their various dispensations, by the laying on of their hands, in fulfillment of the promise that there should be a restoration of all things. Among these prophets of old who came to him was Elijah, who committed unto him the keys of his dispensation as spoken of by Malachi, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse at the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Thus was introduced into the world again the doctrine of universal salvation—the doctrine that the dead also may hear the truth and be redeemed from sin on condition of their repentance and acceptance of the ordinances performed by the living in their behalf. He taught the eternity of the marriage covenant, and the perpetual union of the family in the Celestial Kingdom of our Father, when the contracting parties are sealed by the spirit of promise by one holding the divine authority to officiate in these sacred ordinances. He taught the literal gathering of Israel and the restoration of a remnant of the Jews to their promised land and the rebuilding of Jerusalem as a holy city. He gave to the world the Book of Mormon, a sacred history of the ancient inhabitants of America, which contains the everlasting Gospel as it was taught to them. He overturned the long-cherished

error that the heavens were as brass and no more revelation was to be received from on high. Many other marvelous truths he taught to mankind as he received them through divine revelation, correcting false beliefs and placing again in the reach of the people the means of escape from their sins and the judgment to come on condition of their repentance. Great was the work that he performed under the direction and inspiration of the Lord who commissioned him and ordained him to stand at the head of the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times, holding the keys of power and authority on the earth to officiate in Jesus' name.

He should have been heralded by all the world as its greatest benefactor since the days that redemption was made by the Son of God. For he did more for the salvation of men in this world than any other man, save Jesus only. Yet he was reviled, persecuted, and finally martyred by wicked men and sealed his testimony with his blood which testament is of force and will stand against all who reject his message, at the last day at the judgment bar of God. Notwithstanding the opposition that was made against him and his work and the persecution he received from bigoted men, his teachings and the work that he accomplished still live and are triumphant over every opposition and attack that has been made against them. It must be so, for it is the truth from heaven that he established, and it will prevail and flourish until it conquers all things and

fills the earth to the universal praise and glory of the Father.

This book, prepared by Elder Osborne J. P. Widtsoe, dealing with the important subject of the restoration of the everlasting Gospel, should be read and its contents carefully considered by those who are seeking after truth. It treats the restoration clearly, and places before the people many things that have not been generally considered heretofore. It will be a means of strengthening the faith of the youth of Israel and will impart information that is invaluable. May the spirit of truth accompany the work and rest upon all those who diligently read it with a desire to learn of and profit by the restoration of the Gospel!

JOSEPH F. SMITH, JR.



The Restoration of the Gospel

I.

A RELIGIOUS REVIVAL.

The Smiths little thought when they moved in 1818 to the township of Manchester, that their name would soon become known for good or for ill the world over. The years before had been years of honor and distinction in the community where they had lived. Robert Smith—the first of the family in America—had emigrated from England in the year 1638; and for four generations his posterity lived in the little town of Topsfield,^a Massachusetts. They tilled the soil with faithfulness and prospered, and were respected by their neighbors. All of them were patriots, devoted to the cause of American liberty; some of them served with courage and distinction in the great War of Independence. But when the war was over, they retired to their farms—to their daily, honorable toil. The head of the Smith family in 1818 was born in Topsfield, too, in the year 1771. When a young man,

^aRobert Smith purchased two hundred eight acres of land located partly in Boxford township, partly in Topsfield. For this reason he was called Robert Smith of Boxford.

however, he moved with his father to Tunbridge, Vermont. There, young Smith acquired a farm of his own, and married. There, through the trickery of his associates in a commercial enterprise, he failed. But he paid honestly every debt. He sold his farm; he sold his horses and his cattle; he sold all that he had, and set out empty-handed for Palmyra, New York, to start life anew. Two hundred acres of forest land he cleared and put under cultivation. Then, in common with many others who were pioneering in New York, Smith lost the newly broken farm because he could not meet the final payment. Nothing daunted, however, Mr. Smith moved with his family to Manchester township. There he secured a comfortable farm of sixteen acres, and prepared to continue the quiet life of honest toil and prosperity that had characterized his family since Robert Smith first set foot on American soil. There was nothing about the Smiths in 1818 to indicate that their name would ever become known beyond their immediate neighborhood.

In the spring of 1820, however, Manchester, with other parts of western New York, was swept by a wave of religious revival. Religious revivals were not uncommon in the century that is past. The people of the Christian world were then more susceptible to religious emotion than they are today. Those of the American frontier were especially very generally devoted to the cause of religion. They read the Bible prayerfully, and they attended to the worship of God on the Sabbath day. But they did

not, of course, understand perfectly the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. Disputes arose often among them—disputes on questions of doctrine between the votaries of the various denominational sects. For then, as now, there existed an unauthorized number of differing creeds. And these disputes led often to unfortunate defections. Truly, the house of God should not be a house of turmoil; when strife and confusion arose, it is no wonder that many, who looked for peace and order, should become indifferent to the affairs of the Church. When there was but one accepted Christian church, and that one universal in its authority, it was still sufficiently difficult to secure faithful observance of church ritual. When the Christian world became broken into hundreds of contending sects—and no one of them nearly universal in its authority—it became measurably more difficult to hold the religious interest of the people. It was, then, when there occurred a kind of apostasy from spiritual things that religious revivals were held such as that which came to Manchester in the spring of 1820.

The revival movement of that year seems to have originated with the Methodists in the winter of 1819. Rapidly, however, it spread from sect to sect, and from village to village, until every denomination in western New York was affected by it. The ministers—most prominent among whom were the Reverend Mr. Stockton of the Presbyterian church and the Reverend Mr. Lane of the Methodist church—united in the effort to bring about a spiritual awak-

ening. They did what lay in their power to do to inspire religious enthusiasm. They professed that they cared not with what sect a man might later ally himself, so only he "got religion" and became "converted." Thus, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, the Baptists, and all other denominations there represented, seemed to co-operate unitedly, and in love, to bring about the greatest good for the people concerned.

And the people responded encouragingly to the efforts of the ministerial body. Those who lived in the cities attended the revival meetings in throngs; those who lived far away flocked to the larger centers to take part in the spiritual awakening. The leaders preached eloquent, emotional sermons. They marshaled their arguments with masterly skill. They wrought upon the fears of the people till they became stirred to the very depths of their souls. Often these revival meetings were productive of marvelous manifestations. The great revival of Kentucky, in 1800, seems to have been in a way the beginning and inspiration of a long series of revivals in following years. The meetings held there were typical of the revival in general; we turn to descriptions of them to learn how they were conducted, and how they were characterized. Professor J. B. Turner of Illinois College says, "The people were accustomed to assemble, sometimes to the number of ten or twelve thousand, and they often continued together, in devotional exercises, for several days and nights. Here the people were sometimes seized with general

tremor, the pulse grew weaker, their breathing difficult, and, at long intervals, their hands and feet became cold, and finally they fell, and both pulse and breath, and all symptoms of life forsook them for nearly an hour, during which time they suffered no pain, and were perfectly conscious of their condition and knew what was passing around them.

“At one time during service, several shrieks were uttered, and people fell in all directions. Not less than one thousand fell at one meeting. Their outward expressions of devotion consisted in alternate singing, crying, laughing, shouting, and every variety of violent motion, of which the muscular system is capable. These violent motions they soon became unable to resist. They were violently thrown upon the ground by the convulsions, where their motions ‘resembled those of a fish upon land.’ This disease lasted through several years, in some cases, *and propagated itself by sympathetic imitation, from one to another,*^b with astonishing rapidity; in crowds, and often in small assemblies.”^c

Another professor, writing of the same remarkable phenomena, says, “It happened that in the summer of 1799 two McGee brothers, William, a Presbyterian, and John, a Methodist, when crossing the pine barrens in Ohio, determined to turn aside and visit a sacramental solemnity at Red River. * * * Several preachers spoke. First John McGee, the Methodist, and never, as he says himself, did he

^bThe italics are the present writer’s.

^cTurner, “Mormonism in All Ages” (1842), pp. 272, 273.

preach with more light and liberty. Then his Presbyterian brother and the Rev. Mr. Hodge spoke with much animation and power. While the latter was discoursing, a woman in the east end of the house, unable to repress the violence of her emotions, gave vent to them with shoutings loud and long. At the close of the sermon the other ministers went out, but the two McGees and the people seemed loath to depart. 'William felt such a power come over him that *he quit his seat and sat down on the floor of the pulpit, I suppose not knowing what he did.* A power which caused me to tremble was upon me. There was a solemn weeping all over the house. At length I rose up and exhorted them to let the Lord God Omnipotent reign in their hearts, and submit to Him, and their souls should live. Many broke silence. The woman in the east end of the house shouted tremendously. I left the pulpit and went through the audience shouting and exhorting with all possible ecstasy and energy, and the floor was soon covered with the slain' * * * Upon the return home, they rushed into the arms of their friends, shouting and telling what wonderful things God had done for their souls."^d

It was such a revival movement as this that came to Palmyra and Manchester in 1820. "The seriousness began at Palmyra," we are told. "The youth and children seem to be roused up to enquire, *What must we do to be saved?* A few drops from the

^dDavenport, "Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals," pp. 69, 70—Resume of a letter written by John McGee.

cloud of glory have fallen upon Pittstown. There is uncommon attention to public worship in Canandaigua. It has been difficult during the winter to get places large enough to accommodate, or even contain the people. The countenance of many show how anxious their minds are to know how they may flee from the wrath to come."^e

And thus the revival progressed from day to day, the ministers working harmoniously together in the common purpose of waking the spiritual interests of the people. When, however, the time came for those who had "experienced religion" to profess their party allegiance, it became apparent that the seeming good-will between the sects did not extend below the surface. The ministers began then to contend one with another. The noise and confusion of the sometimes fanatic gospel meetings had been great; but the confusion that followed now was greater and of a more serious kind. Standing in their tent-doors, as it were, the ministers cried to the sorely perplexed new converts, "Lo, here is Christ!" "Lo, here." "The Reverend Mr. Stockton * * * insisted that the work done was largely Presbyterian work as he had been a dominating influence in the movement, and presided at the meetings. The Reverend Mr. Lane of the Methodist church preached a sermon on the subject, 'What Church Shall I Join?' He quoted the golden text of James, 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask

^eJ. H. Hotchkin, "A History of the Purchase and Settlement of Western New York," pp. 36, 37.

of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.'"^f And to the confusion of the scene was added bitterness; for, not only did the newly converted not know with what church to associate themselves, but the pseudo-ministers of God strove among themselves, the one maligning the other. From a well-meant spiritual revival, begun in religious zeal and conducted apparently in brotherly love, there resulted finally bitterness and contention because there was no unity among the professing followers of Christ. The newly converted were hardly better off after their conversion than they were before it.

Meanwhile, there was present during this strenuous religious revival in Manchester, a rather serious-minded boy of some fourteen years of age. He was the fourth child of the Smiths. The Smiths themselves were in the main attracted by the doctrines of the Presbyterians. But Joseph did not know what he should do. He attended the revival meetings. He witnessed the violent manifestations of religious emotion. Undoubtedly, he was deeply affected at times by the excessive demonstrations of his associates and friends. But through it all, he maintained a perfect self-control. Never once was he so overcome by his emotions that he took part in the excitement of his friends. He stood calmly, thoughtfully by—a spectator, puzzled, perplexed. "During this time of great excitement," he wrote in

^fB. H. Roberts, "History of the Mormon Church." in *Americana*. Vol. IV., No. 6, p. 614.

his manhood, "my mind was called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness; but though my feelings were deep and often poignant, still I kept myself aloof from all these parties, though I attended their several meetings as often as occasion would permit. In process of time my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect; but so great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations that it was impossible for a person young as I was, and so unacquainted with men and things, to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong. My mind at times was greatly excited, the cry and tumult were so great and incessant. The Presbyterians were most decided against the Baptists and Methodists, and used all the powers of both reason and sophistry to prove their errors, or, at least, to make the people think they were in error. On the other hand, the Baptists and Methodists in their turn were equally zealous in endeavoring to establish their own tenets and disprove all others."^g

Under such conditions it is hardly to be wondered at that the boy was troubled in mind. The wonder is that he, too, was not overcome by the emotional excitement of the day. Perhaps no fact of psychology is better established than this, that the mental and nervous organizations of like-minded people "respond in like ways to the same stimuli." With the religious folk of the Manchester revival this boy

^g"History of the Church," Vol. I, pp. 3, 4.

was undoubtedly sympathetically like-minded. Yet, he did not yield to the emotional impulses that seized upon his friends; and that, too, in spite of the fact further asserted by psychologists and sociologists, that sympathetically like-minded people "are not likely to have their primitive and instinctive nervous tendencies and mental traits under the governance of the higher inhibitory centers;" and that "the nervously unstable, the suggestible, the *inexperienced*,^h [are] affected by the highly emotional revival earlier than the dignified and intelligent people of judgment and standing."ⁱ This boy of fourteen years was inexperienced; his standing in the eyes of the world was nil; yet, his primitive and instinctive tendencies and mental traits seemed to be well under the governance of the higher inhibitory centers.

Professor Frederick Morgan Davenport, whom I have already quoted, says further in his treatise of the primitive traits of religious revivals, that, "we must bear in mind constantly that the effect of a sympathetic religious movement is greatly increased by the massing of men and women in a psychological 'crowd,' a camp meeting for instance. * * The natural result of the assembling of men in crowds, especially when skilful speakers engage their attention and play upon the chords of imagination and emotion, seems to be the weakening of the power of inhibition in each individual, and the giving of

^hItalics are present writer's.

ⁱDavenport, "Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals," pp. 2, 3.

free reign to feeling and imitation. * * * This will be most in evidence among primitive, superstitious and unlettered people, of course, for civilization shows itself in nothing more clearly than in the growing capacity for individual self-control, but they will also appear in the relatively high stages of culture and experience if the combination of conditions, physical, mental and social, is strong enough to develop them. In fact there is no population, there are comparatively few individuals in any population who cannot be swept from the moorings of reason and balanced judgment if brought under the mysterious and potent influence of the psychological 'crowd.'"^j

The boy, Joseph Smith, was present in the massing of men and women, in a "psychological crowd," so-called, in a camp-meeting even. There were skilful speakers present to engage the attention and to play upon the chords of imagination and emotion. While he was neither wholly primitive, nor very superstitious, he was, to be sure, unlettered. He had certainly not passed through the higher stages of culture and experience. Indeed, there was present in him a combination of conditions—physical, mental, and social—that would lead one to expect in him the usual display of emotional excitement in a sympathetic religious movement. Yet, he displayed unusual self-restraint through it all. He was not "brought under the mysterious and potent influence

^jDavenport, "Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals," pp. 9, 10.

of the psychological 'crowd.' " He confesses to experiencing feelings both deep and poignant, and to becoming excited at times; yet he kept himself aloof from all the contending parties. He seemed to possess a strongly developed "capacity for individual self-control." He became somewhat partial to the Methodists; but since he could not determine, amid such scenes of confusion and strife, whether or not they were wholly right, he refrained from allying himself with any sect. While his friends and associates lost themselves in a kind of religious frenzy, this boy, scarce fourteen years of age, asserted his independence of thought and feeling, and held himself aloof from the religious excitement of his day.

However, it must not be forgotten that his mind was exercised over religious conditions. He longed to know the truth. He sought earnestly to find it out. And in a condition of calmness, clearness of vision and perfect self-control—perplexed in mind, but not weakend by emotion or excitement—Joseph Smith, Junior, sought the Lord in prayer.

From that moment, almost, the name of the Smiths became known the world over for good or for ill.

II.

A VISION OF THE FATHER AND THE SON.

It was a clear, beautiful morning in the early spring. Joseph Smith, the boy, awoke from his slumbers with an insistent desire to know what church he should join. The revival was drawing to a close. If he were to be "converted" during the progress of the revival, he must "get religion" soon. Yet, he could not determine which of the contending sects was right. Only one thing seemed indelibly impressed upon his mind. It was the sermon of his friend, the Rev. Mr. Lane of the Methodist church, and the golden text of James. That, especially, seemed to weigh upon him. He found the text in his own Bible, and read again the golden words,

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

The words sank deep into the boy's heart. He pondered them earnestly. Surely, he lacked wisdom; for he did not know what he would best do to serve the Lord. Then, if the Lord gave freely to those who asked, and upbraided not, why should he not ask? The question recurred again and again. At length, he determined that he must forever remain

ignorant of the truth, or he must seek the Lord in prayer according to the admonition of James. On this beautiful morning in the spring of 1820, then, Joseph Smith retired into the nearby wood to pray. It was the first time in his life that he had made such a venture. "Amidst all my anxieties," he wrote in the story of his life, "I had never yet made the attempt to pray vocally."^a

What followed in the sacred grove is best described in the Prophet's own words:

"After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction. But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction—not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world, who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being—just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the

^a"Pearl of Great Price," p. 84.

brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

"It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spoke to me, calling me by name, and said, pointing to the other—

"THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, HEAR HIM!"

"My object in going to enquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right—and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong, and the personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in His sight: that those professors were all corrupt; that 'they draw near me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.' He again forbade me to join with any of them: and many other things did He say unto me, which I cannot write at this time. When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven. When the light had departed, I had no strength; but soon recovering in some degree, I went

home. And as I leaned up to the fireplace, mother inquired what the matter was. I replied, 'Never mind, all is well—I am well enough off.' I then said to my mother, 'I have learned for myself that Presbyterianism is not true.' "

Such was the first vision—a vision of the Father and the Son. It was the first act in the great drama of the Restoration. Of course, Joseph's friends could scarcely believe that anything so wonderful had happened to him. He related the strange experience to the ministers; but they scoffed at the suggestion of a new revelation. Moreover, they became suddenly possessed of a bitter and inexplicable hatred of the young seer. They made him a public butt of ridicule; they maligned him in their discourses; and they persecuted him when he came among them. For having exercised a remarkable "capacity for individual self-control"; for having sought from the Lord Himself to know the truth; for testifying that he had received the truth in a vision—the boy seer was cast off by his fellow-men and doomed to stand alone. But "I had actually seen a light," he wrote in after years, "and in the midst of that light I saw two personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart, Why persecute me for telling the truth? * * * For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I

could not deny it, neither dared I do it, at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation."^b

And what really was the significance of this first vision? Of what consequence was a boy's prophetic sight that the world should take cognizance of it? What great far-reaching truths did the vision contain, that the religious world should still writhe under it?

In the first place, the experience of the boy-prophet demonstrated the fact that the word of God is good; it holds for anyone who approaches Him in faith. The sectarian world had come to look upon the Holy Bible as little more than any other book. It was to be read, but not to be believed, so to say. But Joseph took seriously the word of God as announced by the prophet James. The boy prayed earnestly and honestly; and in answer to his prayer came the glorious vision of the Father and the Son. The word of God is truth, not fiction.

Secondly, this first experience of the prophet revealed the fact that spiritual gifts may be enjoyed even in this day by those who seek the Lord in truth. Anciently, men dreamed dreams, saw visions, spoke in tongues, healed the sick, and did many other strange things by the power of the Lord. Just such things may men do now by the exercise of proper faith. It was thus that Joseph gained the spiritual blessings of the first vision.

^b"History of the Church," Vol. I, pp. 6-8.

Then, in this vision was first announced the fact of the great apostasy. Jesus Himself denounced all the denominations of the world, saying that they worshiped Him with their lips but their hearts were far from Him. He admonished the young boy who had sought Him in prayer to join no one of them. Moreover, it appears on analysis of the vision, that Jesus could accept none of the ministers who purported to serve Him. They taught for doctrine the precepts of men. They held no authority from Jesus. And to preach in His name, surely the preacher should hold authority from Him.

Then, this glorious first vision demonstrated the fact of the personality of God. Two heavenly beings appeared before the prophet. They were in form and bearing like men. The one raised His hand and pointed to the other and spoke. The other instructed the boy, as a tutor might instruct his pupil. Moreover, in this same vision was clearly demonstrated the fact that the members of the Godhead are separate and distinct persons.

Finally, the vision established the fact that God can and will speak to man whenever He chooses so to do, in any age. Indeed, when the Church of Christ is upon the earth, there must also be revelation, or communication with God. When revelation ceases, the true church also ceases, for it drifts like a rudderless ship from its course.

These points, then, are demonstrated by the first vision of Joseph Smith:—the word of God is to be relied upon; spiritual gifts will attend the faithful even

at the present day; the Christian churches of the world are without authority; the God of heaven is a God of personal, tangible form; the members of the Godhead are separate and distinct in person; and, finally, the Church of Christ must be favored with continued revelation, else it must suffer spiritual death. But all these points were contrary to the doctrines of both Catholic and Protestant churches. In upholding them, the boy-prophet aroused against himself the opposition of the whole religious world. Is it a matter of wonder, then, that the name of Joseph Smith is known the world over for good or for ill? Is it a matter of wonder that the religious world should take cognizance of the boy's prophetic sight, or that it should writhe under the arraignment of the first vision? Is it not rather a matter of wonder and admiration, that the boy, scarce fourteen years old, evilly spoken of and persecuted, should still persist in his testimony that he had seen a vision? And from that first vision what further has grown adds further to the wonder and admiration of the boy selected to usher in another dispensation.

III.

SEVEN MARKS OF THE GREAT APOSTASY.

Perhaps the most important count in the arraignment of Joseph Smith's first vision is that the Christian world has departed from the simple Gospel of the Lord Jesus. "They draw near me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrines the commandments of men: having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof," the Lord said to the prophet in speaking of the Christian denominations. And, surely, the tumult, the strife, the confusion of such religious revivals as that of 1820, are sufficient evidence that the words of the Savior were true. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism"^a had been the doctrine of Jesus and the apostles. In 1820, there were many faiths, and many baptisms.

That this condition should exist in the religious world of the nineteenth century, was only a natural consequence in the course of history. Jesus and the apostles had taught in early times the Gospel in its pure simplicity. Soon after the passing of the apostles, however, the Christian church had departed from the orthodox doctrines of the Lord, and had become corrupt in many ways. Persecution, waged

^aEph. 4:1-13.

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by both the Jews and the Gentiles, was in part responsible for the great apostasy; but possibly prosperity, and the adoption of Christianity as the state form of worship, were even more productive of a general abandonment of the religious doctrines taught by Jesus and the apostles. In a general way, there are seven points in which the apostasy of the early Christian church is marked.

In the first place, the doctrine of the Godhead became greatly changed soon after the apostolic age. It had been taught that man was made in the image of God; that, therefore, God was a person of body and parts. Jesus, the one perfect man to take upon Him flesh, was in the express image of God the Father.^b There soon grew in the church, however, diverse opinions of the nature of God. He became an inconceivable immateriality with boundless power. The result in modern doctrine is a kind of divine nonentity, everywhere present yet nowhere to be found—an impossible being with neither shape nor dimension, with neither parts nor passions, but who, nevertheless, abides in an undefined place called Heaven, and loves the children of earth. Moreover, the doctrine of the unity, or the trinity, of the Godhead also became perverted in the early church. It had been taught that there were three beings in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; separate and distinct in person, but one—that is united—in purpose and action. After the passing of the apostles it was

^bGen. 1:26, 27; 5:1-3; Heb. 1:1-3.

taught that these three were only one:—"the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and yet they are not three Gods but one God."^c

In the second place, the doctrine of the necessity of divine authority became wholly ignored. The men of old understood that they might not assume of their own accord to officiate in the things of God. Jesus stated the doctrine tersely when He said to His apostles, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you."^d In later times, however, it became popular for men to elect the office of priest or minister. At the present time men choose the calling of preacher as they do that of lawyer or doctor. They seek positions that confer upon the holders worldly recognition and riches.

In the third place, the organization and government of the primitive church became corrupted. In the church of Christ there had been apostles, prophets, evangelists, seventies, elders, bishops, priests, teachers, and deacons.^e These officers were maintained as long as the apostles lived; there are many references to them during the first century of the Christian era. Soon thereafter, however, many of these officers were dropped as unnecessary. Today, there is not a denomination descended from the old Catholic church that maintains in its organization all the officers provided by the great Master; nor does the Catholic church itself do so. And with the church organization corrupted, it follows that the

^cAthanasian Creed.

^dHeb. 4; II Pet. 1:21; John 15:16-19.

^eEph. 4:11 ff; I Cor. 12:12-29.

church government must be incomplete and inadequate.

In the fourth place, it was not very long after the passing of the apostles, before the outward ordinances of the church became changed to suit the convenience of men. Baptism had been administered by immersion, as the word indicates.^f The custom arose, however, merely to sprinkle the applicant for baptism; or, at most, to pour a little water on him. Furthermore, while the ordinance was meant only for adults, or for young people that had reached years of accountability, it was applied, after the time of Christ, to babes, who could neither know nor confess Him. The sacrament of the Lord's supper, too, was burdened with ceremony, and changed materially.^g The ordinance of administration to the sick was dismissed as useless.^h In fact, there remains in the churches today hardly an ordinance that has not been changed to suit the whims of men.

In the fifth place, the church ritual became perverted under the administration of those who professed to follow after Jesus and His apostles. Nothing could be simpler or purer than the church service instituted by the Savior. After the third century, the simplicity was gone forever. To gain the good will and the favor of the pagans, many of their customs and ceremonies were adopted by the Christian church. So far was this done that the Christian worship of today is sometimes more nearly akin to

^fMatt. 3:13-17.

^gLuke 22; Matt. 26; I Cor. 11:23-26.

^hJas. 5:14, 15.

the pagan worship of old, than it is to the simple worship of the Church of Christ.

. In the sixth place, the spiritual gifts—so common in the days of the apostles—became wholly lost to the later Christian church. Prophecy, healing, speaking in tongues, and other marvelous blessings, are enumerated by the Apostle Paul. He makes clear the fact that these gifts *will* be manifest whenever the authorized church operates. Unfortunately, belief in the spiritual gifts is rare in the modern Christian church.

Finally, the body of church doctrine became corrupted in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries. To consider all the changes in church doctrine would require more space than can be allowed in this brief summary. Suffice it to say that besides the changes in doctrine already named, there was departure from the truth in many essential ways; as, for example, the introduction of the doctrine that infants if unsprinkled would be eternally damned; that condemnation for sin meant eternal condemnation, without hope of relief, worlds without end; that there may be two standards of morality in this life, and so forth. In short, though it may appear to be a bold and a very general statement, it seems to be true that only a few doctrines concerning the salvation of man, from the time of his advent into this world to the time of the great judgment, remain today as they were taught by Jesus.

From these seven points, then—the corruption of the doctrine of God and the Godhead; the rejection

of the doctrine of Divine Authority; the distortion of the doctrine of church organization and church government; the changing of the outward ordinances; the perversion of the simple church ritual; the loss of spiritual gifts; and the corruption of the body of church doctrines,—from these seven points, it is indisputably evident that the great apostasy from the primitive Christian church is an accomplished fact. Although there followed in the middle ages a period of reformation—or revolution—yet there was effected no return to the primitive faith. There came no new revelation, and therefore there could come no authorized church. The churches of the Protestants were merely broken off from the mother Catholic church, which they themselves believed to be apostate. Each new religious teacher as he arose placed his own personal interpretation upon the word of God. Thus there came to be many creeds; and since these creeds differed materially in essential points, contention and strife became inevitably common among the sects.

Such was the condition of the world in the spring of 1820. Although, for the purposes of a revival meeting, the ministers of the Protestant churches might unite for a time in a general effort to waken the people to spiritual life, yet there lay beneath the surface feelings of antagonism and bitterness the one toward the other. The seven marks of the apostasy make them alien to Christ.ⁱ

ⁱFor a full consideration of the apostasy and the so-called reformation, see B. H. Roberts' "Outlines of Ecclesiastical History," and J. E. Talmage's "The Great Apostasy."

IV.

THE RESTORATION PREDICTED.

The great universal apostasy we have thus briefly described was foretold by many of the ancient prophets. In both the New and the Old Testament may be found pertinent references to a general falling-away; for the prophets of old—specially chosen men who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost—foresaw clearly that even the simple words of Jesus would become corrupted, though the fact of His ministry might be accepted.

And just as the prophets of old foresaw the falling away, so, too, they foresaw and predicted the glorious restoration. The blissful condition to be desired at the time of the restoration was described by the Lord to Jeremiah. The Lord God would make a new covenant with His people. It was to be a time when the law of the Lord should be put in the “inward parts” of the people, and they should “teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord”; for they should all know Him, from the least of them to the greatest of them.^a How far we are in the modern religious world from realizing the condition here described, it is needless to say. The promised new covenant has certainly not been generally accepted. The time

^aJer. 31:31-34.

remains yet to come when creeds shall cease contending one with another, saying, "Know the Lord." The time is not yet to come, however, when the new covenant shall be introduced. It is here.

King Nebuchadnezzar had one night a wonderful dream. He saw standing before him a great image of excellent brightness, but terrible form. The head of the image was of gold; the breast and the arms were of silver; the belly and the thighs were of brass; the legs were of iron; and the feet were part of iron and part of clay. As the image stood before the dreamsight of the king, there appeared a stone cut without hands, which smote the feet of the image and broke it to pieces. The clay, the iron, the brass, the silver, the gold, of which the image was made became like chaff and were scattered in the winds of heaven; but the little stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

To the Hebrew prophet Daniel was given the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The four parts made of gold, and silver, and brass, and iron, represented, he said, four great world kingdoms that should arise. In fact, the first of them—that represented by the head of gold—was Nebuchadnezzar's own, the kingdom of Babylon. After it should arise another inferior to it—the kingdom of the Medes and Persians—typified by the breast and arms of silver. There should come in succession two others—the kingdom of Alexander, a kingdom of brass to bear rule over the whole earth; and the empire of Rome, an empire of iron, strong, to break in

pieces and subdue all things. Finally, after the fall of these four world empires, the earth should be divided into many kingdoms, some strong and some weak, as the feet and toes of the image were part of iron and part of potter's clay. Then, in the days of these kingdoms, said the prophet Daniel, "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever."^b

Plainly, the stone cut without hands stands for the Church of Christ, the Kingdom of God. In the day of the petty governments that sprang from the ruins of Rome, the stone should appear. At some time *after* the fall of Rome, the kingdom of God should be established. But that day and time are modern day and time; and modern time is now. In our day, then, according to the vision of King Nebuchadnezzar, interpreted by the prophet Daniel, the God of heaven should establish His kingdom among men. Here is a clear prediction of the restoration of the Church of God.

Again, in the book of the prophet Malachi, occur passages that point unmistakably to a time of restoration. The Lord promises to send a messenger, before He shall come suddenly to His temple. Then only the righteous shall stand, for He shall be like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap.^c Again, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord—when all the

^bDan. 2:31-45.

^cMal. 3:1-3.

proud and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble—the Lord promises to send Elijah, to “turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers,” that the earth may not be smitten with a curse.^d These, too, are clear predictions of a restoration, setting forth some things to be accomplished. And it is evidently then—for it has not been before—that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and the nations shall come to it to learn of the ways of the Lord.^e

Now, it may be objected that these prophecies were all fulfilled in the ministry of the Lord Jesus. The objection is, however, untenable. The conditions described in the predictions did not exist at the time of Christ. In the first place, that was not the great and terrible day of the Lord, when the proud and the wicked should burn as stubble. Next, the Lord did not then come suddenly to His temple; nor did He sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. Furthermore, at the time of Christ, Rome was still in her glory. The feet and toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s image had not yet grown forth. It was too soon for the stone to roll forth from the mountain. Then again, it was predicted by Daniel that the kingdom of Christ which he saw established should never be destroyed nor given to another people. Jesus Himself, however, said to the people of His day, because of their unbelief, “The kingdom of God shall be taken from

^dMal. 4:1-6.

^eMicah. 4:1-2.

you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”^f If, therefore, the kingdom of God typified by the stone were established in the days of Jesus, then either Daniel or Jesus must fall as a false prophet. Since, however, both were holy men of God—and one a God Himself—it must be that Daniel’s prophecy remained yet to be fulfilled. Examine the scriptures from any point of view, the conclusion remains the same: Although Jesus established His Church while upon the earth, yet it was not the establishment that should never be changed nor be given to other people. In the economy of God, there remained yet another period when His kingdom should be established for the last time, when the righteous should gain the victory over sin, and when the God of Glory should finally come as King of kings to rule over His own.

That other period was seen in splendid vision by the beloved disciple of Jesus. John was on the Isle of Patmos. It was long after the Lord had been crucified. The falling-away had already begun. In terrible vision, John had been shown how the Church should be persecuted by its enemies, and how, finally, it should flee into the wilderness to be seen no more for a long period by man. Then, after the apostasy had been fully accomplished, and the world had been prepared, should come the restoration. Six mighty angels had John seen, each with his special mission to perform. Then there appeared the seventh. Of him John writes:

^fMatt. 21:42, 43.

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”^g

Naturally, if there had been no apostasy, there would have been no need of another angel flying in the midst of heaven to restore the gospel,—neither to a community, nor to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. Naturally, too, since this condition was seen in vision by John while on the Isle of Patmos, it could not have been fulfilled in the ministry of the Savior. It belonged to a future time, to a time subsequent to that of John. It confirms the prediction of Daniel, that the kingdom of God should be established at some time after the fall of Rome. And it reveals the manner of the restoration: there should come an angel flying, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the earth.

In conclusion, it may be observed that the restoration was, according to the prophets, to be a restoration in very deed—a restitution of all things. In the sermon delivered on Solomon’s porch, Peter predicted “the time of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”^h Peter understood that

^gRev. 12, 13, 14 chapters.

^hActs 3:21.

there must be a period of restoration before the end of the world—before, indeed, Jesus the Christ could come again. Undoubtedly, it was the same thing Jesus had in mind, when He said, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations: and then shall the end come.”ⁱ

The restoration was, then, a part of the general plan, as well as the apostasy. It must of necessity follow after the apostasy. Not only the great falling-away, but the splendid restoration also, was clearly foreseen and predicted by the ancient prophets. The time of the restoration was to be the time of the kings that should follow the fourth great world-empire—that is, it was to be modern time. And the act of the restoration was to come through no human means, but should be like a stone cut out of the mountain without hands. It was to be brought about by the ministry of angels.

ⁱMatt. 24:14.

V.

AN ANGEL FLYING.

Three and a half years passed silently by after Joseph Smith received the vision of the Father and the Son. During that time there was no further communication from heaven. That he had received one vision, Joseph stoutly and fearlessly maintained. Neither persuasion nor persecution could break the testimony he had borne, nor dispel the knowledge he had divinely gained. The vision he had seen was real; the knowledge he had gained was real. He could not deny it. For three and a half years after this vision, however, he was apparently shut out from the presence of God. The young seer was left to himself. It was a period of silence.

Two things are notable in the conduct of Joseph's life during these years. First, he manifested the same self-control and absence of emotion or excitement, that he possessed when he went into the wood to pray. Had he been a victim of the "potent influence of the psychological 'crowd' "^a he would undoubtedly have suffered from the religious disease and fanaticism common to revival movements. The excite-

^aThe term "psychological crowd" is used in this chapter and elsewhere in the sense in which it is used by Prof. Davenport in the quotation in the first chapter of this book.

ment of the revival would have remained with him—as it did with everyone else—for an extended period of time. With the conviction of the glorious vision of the Father and the Son upon his mind, the boy would undoubtedly have felt still further emotional excitement, and would have been led to see further visions after the first one. Moreover, had he become subject to any derangement of mind, or diseased condition like epilepsy, as has been claimed by some of his defamers, he would have become even more liable to visionary manifestations. It was not so, however. His health was perfect; his self-control, complete. For three and a half years the heavens were shut above him. For three and a half years the God of heaven spoke no further word to him. For three and a half years he was left alone to ponder what he had seen, and to bear persecution unaided for testifying to truth. Always he was calm, unruffled, unaffected by religious passion or frenzy.

Next, Joseph Smith manifested no desire, even though he had seen and talked with God Himself, to arrogate to himself any authority whatsoever. Many others in the history of the world claim to have seen visions. Mohammed, when forty years of age, saw in vision—he says—the angel Gabriel, and was commanded to preach a new religion. The authority to do so, he assumed at once. Joan of Arc, in response to the alleged heavenly voice which spoke to her, hurried to the side of the dauphin of France. Emmanuel Swedenborg, after years of scientific activity, began suddenly to herald a new church, and

to interpret the word of God in a score of theological works—for, he claimed, the Lord had appeared to him in vision. With Joseph Smith, however, it was different. While he maintained stoutly, against the ridicule of friends even, that he had beheld a vision of the Father and the Son, he did not presume therefore to promulgate a new doctrine, or to establish a new church. He continued in the routine of his daily labor. He meditated what the Lord had said to him. He had been told that the sectarian churches of the world were wrong. He might have proceeded to establish a church that should be right. But Joseph had not yet received a full commission. He did not presume to do what undoubtedly he would have done had he been merely a victim of the “psychological crowd.” For three and a half years, he waited for further instructions from the God of heaven.

On the evening of the twenty-first of September, 1823, Joseph Smith approached the Lord God again in secret prayer. This time it was in his private chamber. Fearing that he had offended God, that he had not walked so circumspectly as he should have done in the light of the revelation he had received, the youth, now in his eighteenth year, besought the Almighty for forgiveness of sin, and for a manifestation that he might know his standing before God. In his own account of what happened there, Joseph says,

“While I was thus in the act of calling upon God I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was brighter than

at noon-day, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor. He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness beyond anything earthly I had ever seen; nor do I believe that any earthly thing could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant. His hands were naked, and his arms also, a little above the wrist; so also were his feet naked, as were his legs, a little above the ankles. His head and neck were also bare. I could discover that he had no other clothing on but this robe, as it was open, so that I could see into his bosom. Not only was his robe exceedingly white, but his whole person was glorious beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning. The room was exceedingly light, but not so very bright as immediately around his person.

“When I first looked upon him, I was afraid; but the fear soon left me. He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni, that God had a work for me to do, and that my name should be had for good and for evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people. He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fulness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants; also, that there

were two stones in silver bows—and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim—deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted ‘Seers’ in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book.”^a

There followed then further instructions based upon the Holy Scriptures. The angel read and explained portions of the third and fourth chapters of Malachi. The third chapter predicts the sending of a messenger to prepare the way of the Lord when He shall come suddenly to His temple. The coming will be attended with much glory; and the Lord Himself shall purify Israel, and purge it of iniquity. The time of the fulfillment of this prophecy, said the angel, was at hand.

The fourth chapter of Malachi, is particularly interesting as quoted by the angel. The first verse he rendered thus:

“For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble, for they that come shall burn them, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.”

The fifth and sixth verses, he read thus:

“Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he

^a“History of the Church,” Vol. I, pp. 11, 12.

shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to the fathers; if it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming."

These predictions, too, said the angel, were about to be fulfilled.

Moroni then quoted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah. It predicts a day of peace and righteousness, when an ensign shall be set up for the Gentiles, and when the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to gather His scattered people. This time was at hand, and was about to be fulfilled.

Next the angel read from the sermon of Peter on Solomon's Porch:

"For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people."^b

This prophecy, also, was about to have a complete fulfillment.

Finally, among many other scriptures, the angel quoted from the great prophecy of Joel. Before the great and terrible day of the Lord, according to this wonderful prediction, the old men shall dream dreams, and the young men shall see visions, and wonders shall appear in the heaven and the earth.

^bActs 3:22. 23

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood; but whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered.^c This same prophecy was referred to by Peter on the day of Pentecost, and was possibly in part accomplished then. But the prediction refers unmistakably to the last days—before the great and terrible day of the Lord. Now is the day of Joel's great prophecy, and now, said the angel Moroni, it is about to be fulfilled.

Thereupon, the vision was closed. Gradually the light assembled from the room about the person of the angel. Then he disappeared into heaven, leaving the room in total darkness. The youth to whom had been given this marvelous manifestation lay wide awake on his bed. Sleep was driven from his eyes. He was filled with amazement at the singularity of the vision, and at the doctrines that had been explained to him. Then suddenly, in the midst of his wonder and meditation, the heavenly messenger appeared again. He stood again in the air by the bedside, and repeated minutely all the instructions he had given before. He added predictions concerning the great judgments that should come to the earth, with desolations by famine, sword, and pestilence—and all these things should come during the present generation.

Again the vision closed. Again the light centered in the angel as he disappeared and left the room in darkness. The youth lay again wondering at the

^cJoel 2:28-32.

marvelous vision, when, to his astonishment, the same divine messenger appeared the third time, and repeated all that he had said before. "After this third visit," writes the Prophet, "he again ascended in heaven as before, and I was again left to ponder on the strangeness of what I had just experienced; when almost immediately after the heavenly messenger had ascended from me the third time, the cock crowed, and I found that day was approaching."^d Thus ended the second act in the great drama of the Restoration.

Now, what is the significance of this second vision—or of this series of visions? Of what importance is it in the story of man's relationship to God? What bearing has it on the story of the Restoration?

First, it was declared that the Lord God had a work for Joseph to do. In the first vision nothing is recorded of the boy's future mission. He had been told merely to join none of the contending churches striving to win his favor. They were corrupt. Now, the life-work of the boy is briefly outlined. He is to raise an ensign to the nations, and become an instrument in the hands of God in bringing about the gathering of Israel. God is to set His hand a second time to recover His people. Moreover, Joseph is to become a prophet to reveal the word and the law of the Lord. His name, therefore, shall become known for good or for evil the whole world over.

Next, a book, written in a strange tongue on gold-

^d"History of the Church," Vol. I, p. 14.

en plates, is to be delivered to the boy for him to translate. This book contains the history of the inhabitants of the American continent, and will reveal the mysteries of the origin of the American Indian, and of the relics of ancient civilization. Moreover, this book of golden plates contains the fulness of the everlasting Gospel as it was taught to the Nephites. It was taught by Jesus Himself to the ancient inhabitants of this continent. Now, when the world has departed from the truth, it is to be restored by an angel to a divinely chosen prophet of God.

Then the priesthood is to be revealed to Joseph Smith by the hand of Elijah. The keys of the dispensation of "turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers" are to be committed into the hands of the Prophet Joseph. This work of which Elijah appears to be the director, is of a particular kind. He shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so the whole earth would be utterly wasted at the coming of the Lord.

Again, wonderful signs shall appear in heaven and in earth in the days of these things. Dreams and visions shall be given to the old and to the young. The earth shall be troubled, and the sun shall be darkened, while the moon shall be turned to the color of blood. Blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke, shall come to plague; but whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered. Finally, great judgments shall come upon the earth—judgments of

sword, and of famine, and of pestilence. And all these things shall come in the present generation.

In this remarkable vision, then, are revealed again seven remarkable truths:—a great work is appointed for the young man, Joseph Smith, to do, and his name is to become known the world over for good or for ill; a book of golden plates containing an account of the ancient inhabitants of America is to be given him to translate; this book, moreover, will contain a fulness of the everlasting gospel which he will be required to teach to the nations; the priesthood will be revealed to him by the hand of Elijah, the prophet; through the operation of the power thus to be committed to the Prophet Joseph, the hearts of the children will be turned to the fathers; in these days, strange signs will appear in heaven and in earth; and, finally, the great and terrible day of the Lord will then speedily come, when judgments of sword, and of famine, and of pestilence, shall visit the earth.

Thus did the angel bear a wonderful message to the eighteen-year-old boy, and thus was the great prediction of an angel flying, in part fulfilled.^e The far-reaching character of the visions will appear as the story proceeds. Already the boy has received in brief something of most of the great saving principles that distinguish the Gospel of Christ.

^eRev. 14:6, 7.

VI.

HIDDEN GOSPEL RECORDS.

On Monday, the twenty-second of September, 1823, Joseph Smith was weary from the vigil of the night before. He went into the field to work with his father, but was too nearly exhausted to carry on his part of the labor. The father observed that Joseph was ill, and advised him to return to the house to rest. On the way, however, while climbing a fence, the boy fell helpless to the ground, and remained so for some time. "The first thing that I can recollect," wrote the Prophet later, "was a voice speaking unto me, calling me by name. I looked up, and beheld the same messenger standing over my head, surrounded by light as before. He then again related unto me all that he had related to me the previous night, and commanded me to go to my father and tell him of the vision and commandments which I had received."^a

Joseph obeyed. He returned to his father and related the whole matter to him. Joseph Smith, Sr., was himself a serious and spiritual man. He recognized the ring of truth in the words of his son. "It is of God," he said; and thereupon he advised his son to go and do as the angel commanded him. Im-

^a"History of the Church," Vol. I, pp. 39-42

mediately, therefore, Joseph departed for the sacred hill that had been shown him in vision.

Not far from the town of Manchester, New York, stands a hill of considerable size. It is the largest elevation of the kind in the neighborhood. The north end of the hill rises abruptly from the plain to a height of some one hundred fifty feet. The southern end, however, rises gradually from the plain near Manchester, and ascends by easy grade until it meets the high elevation of the north. It was in the west side of the hill, not far from the top, that the golden plates were hidden. So distinctly had the Prophet seen the place in vision, that he recognized it the moment he reached it. The top of a rounded stone was exposed to view. When the earth was cleared away, the stone proved to be a kind of convex cover, thick through the middle, thinner at the edges, and flat underneath. With a lever, the Prophet pried off this lid. There, under the cover, was a box made of slabs of stone laid in cement. And there, in the box, resting on cross-pieces of stone, lay the golden plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breast-plate.

It is perhaps impossible to imagine the exhilaration of soul experienced by the young Prophet at that moment. The Father and the Son had deigned to appear to him and speak to him personally. An angel from heaven had appeared to him four times in succession, had given him great promises, and had instructed him in a life-work for which he had been chosen by the God of heaven Himself. Now he stood before the visible, tangible evidence that what

he had seen and heard was no delusion. Before him lay indeed the golden book. There, too, were the sacred interpreters by means of which he should be able to translate it. There, undoubtedly, lay the Scripture containing the fulness of the Gospel. Enraptured—filled with the ecstasy of supreme joy—the boy reached forth his hand to take the sacred relics from their hiding-place.

But the hour had not yet come when these things should be revealed to the world. As Joseph stretched forth his hand to take the sacred plates, the holy angel appeared again, the fifth time, and forbade his touching them. He explained to Joseph that the time was not yet ripe for bringing the records forth. Four years were yet to pass before the plates could be delivered to him. During those four years, Joseph should come to the sacred hill on each succeeding twenty-second of September. The angel would meet him there and give him needful instruction for the consummation of his great life-mission. "Accordingly, as I had been commanded," writes the Prophet, "I went at the end of each year, and at each time I found the same messenger there, and received instruction and intelligence from him at each of our interviews, respecting what the Lord was going to do, and how and in what manner His kingdom was to be conducted in the last days."^b

It is remarkable how deliberately the acts of the Restoration were brought about. In the spring of 1820, in answer to the boy's prayer, the great God of

^b"History of the Church," Vol. I, p. 16.

heaven and earth appeared Himself with His Son, Jesus Christ, to the Prophet Joseph Smith; but that glorious vision bore no further immediate fruit than the restraining of Joseph Smith from joining any of the denominations then contending for new converts. For three and a half long years, he held no further converse with heaven. He was nearly eighteen years of age, and he knew no more of many of the purposes of the Lord than did those who persecuted him for his testimony. Then a special messenger from heaven appeared to him. Three times during the night, and twice the following day, did the angel visit the boy and instruct him. Those instructions, it would seem, covered the ground of the purpose, the mission, and the government of the Kingdom of God. Surely now, the young man was prepared and might be sent forth to accomplish the work divinely appointed him. But no; yet another period of four years must pass—a period of careful preparation—before the sacred record containing the fulness of the Gospel could be delivered to the young prophet. Even then, after four years, with the golden book in the Prophet's hands, the time would not yet be fully come, as we shall see, for the restoration of the Church of Christ.

The four years passed quickly by. It was the twenty-second of September, 1827. Joseph Smith, now a young man of nearly twenty-two, stood once more before the uncovered stone box in which lay the sacred treasures of a former people. The angel, too, was there. The young prophet's four-year

course of training was ended. The angel took the sacred plates, and the Urim and Thummim, and the breast-plate, and delivered them to the Prophet enjoining him to be careful of them. If he should let them go carelessly, or should lose them through any neglect of his, he should be cut off; but if he would use every endeavor to preserve them till the angel should call for them, they should be protected.^c And so the ninth vision of the angel Moroni closed. Holding the sacred records carefully in his arms, the Prophet returned to his home, elated, thrilled with joy at the confidence reposed in him by his God.

The work of translation proved a long and difficult task. The golden book was engraved in ancient Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic characters. Two men came, through the providence of God, to the assistance of the Prophet Joseph: first, Martin Harris; later, Oliver Cowdery. These men acted as scribes, while the Prophet read them the English translation of the strange engravings on the plates. Joseph Smith was far from being a scholar. He knew but little about his own mother-tongue, let alone the ancient languages. It is not to be wondered at, then, if the labor of translation became at times tedious, even with the help of the inspiration of the Lord. The method of translation, as explained to Oliver Cowdery, is thus described by the Lord Himself:

“Behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be

^c“History of the Church,” Vol. I, p. 18.

right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right; but if it be not right, you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought, that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong: therefore you cannot write that which is sacred, save it be given you from me.”^d

The translation of the sacred record was spread over the better part of two and a half years. The whole book was written out in long-hand; and a copy was carefully made, before any of it was sent to the printer. As the young boy had been persecuted for asserting that he had beheld a vision of the Father and the Son, so now he was persecuted for asserting that he had in his possession a sacred record of an ancient people, and that he had translated the record through the inspiration and power of God. Many attempts were made by the Prophet's enemies to steal the plates; but they were protected and preserved as the angel had promised. When the translation was finished, the enemies of the Prophet tried again to destroy his work. They secured from the printer advance sheets of the printed work, and published garbled versions of it. In this, however, they were finally restrained by fear of the law. Joseph Smith had secured a copyright of the book before he sent it to the press. Trial and persecution did not cease, however, but grew rather greater and more severe. Yet, the work of printing went steadily on, and was finally completed. In the early part of the


^dDoc. & Cov. 9:8, 9.

year 1830—ten years after the first vision—the inspired translation of the ancient record was published under the title “The Book of Mormon.” Thus was accomplished another act in the great drama of the Restoration.

And what is the “Book of Mormon?” First, it is an abridgment of certain extensive records made by the ancient civilized peoples of America. The abridgment was made by a prophet called Mormon, hence the name “Book of Mormon.” The people to whom Mormon belonged are known in the book as Nephites. The record is, then, mainly the story of the ancient possession of South and North America by the Nephites. Besides, the book tells of the Lamanites—the brother-descendants of the Nephites who remain to the present as the American Indians; the Mulekites, a colony from Jerusalem that became afterwards merged with the Nephites; and the Jaredites, a company of people led by divine power to the promised land of America from the Tower of Babel. The Nephites themselves, whose history forms by far the greater part of the book, were descended from an Israelitish family led from Jerusalem by the prophet Lehi, 600 years before Christ.

But the “Book of Mormon” is more than history. The angel that John the Revelator saw fly in the midst of heaven, had the everlasting gospel to preach to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. That is why the “Book of Mormon” is more than history. It contains the fulness of the everlasting Gospel as delivered to the Nephites. It is so simple that the

child will read its pages with interest, yet it contains a profound treatment of the philosophy of the Gospel. In the restoration of this sacred record, the prediction of the Apostle John was indeed beautifully fulfilled. Besides the Holy Bible, there was now given to man another volume of Scriptures equally sacred—a monumental volume, free from the doctrines of men, in which the Gospel is treated fully and simply.

 This sacred book could not be a product of religious frenzy. Ten long years passed by after the vision of the Father and the Son, before the Book of Mormon was given to the world. Those ten years were years of simplicity of life. There was no “psychological crowd,” or other emotional excitement to disturb the quiet of the Prophet’s life. Whatever “deep and often poignant” feelings he may have experienced during the spring of 1820, had certainly passed away during the ten years that followed. The “Book of Mormon,” then, came not as a result of the religious frenzy of 1820.

Nor is the assertion tenable that Joseph Smith was an epileptic, as has been asserted by some would-be scientific investigators, or an hypnotic, or a mere impostor. In the first place, the book which he translated and gave to the world is wholly consistent and credible within its covers. Anyone who has endeavored to write a book, or even a magazine article, can testify how the problem of consistency often stares one out of countenance. But here is a book which purports to be a sacred record—a book, in-

spired by the Spirit of God. It contains prophecies and it relates history of war and of peace; it expounds the simplest and the profoundest principles of human salvation; it records the very words of the Lord,—yet it does not once contradict itself, nor is it once inconsistent with itself. Surely, this is a condition of fact that epilepsy, or mere imposition could not achieve.

Moreover, the history of the American continent as set forth in the “Book of Mormon” is corroborated by all that has been discovered of American archæology. Before 1830, little was known of the ancient inhabitants of America. It was not until several years after the appearance of the “Book of Mormon,” that American archæologists began to determine matters of great moment. And from the first to the last, the discoveries of American archæology have not only not conflicted with the statements of the “Book of Mormon” but have borne them out in a remarkable way. Even the most recent researches in American antiquities serve only to strengthen faith in the divine authenticity of the “Book of Mormon.” Such harmony, again, imposition could not achieve.

Furthermore, the “Book of Mormon” is a far greater work than the native ability and education of a boy like Joseph Smith could have produced unaided. He was not yet twenty-five years old when the book was published. He was not ignorant; but he was, at that time, untrained in the wisdom of the world. He could read, and write, and cipher; he

had a good mind, and he could think hard and long; but he knew little of languages, or of history, or of philosophy, or of science, or of any learned branch of the world's knowledge. He did not possess, in short, the information and the training to write unaided such a book as the "Book of Mormon." Yet, he produced a book that is above criticism even from a sane and catholic literary point of view. Once more, such an achievement, imposition—or frenzy—could not have accomplished.

Finally, the "Book of Mormon" is one of the best authenticated books known to the world. The angel Moroni delivered the plates of the book to Joseph Smith and instructed him. But the angel did not appear to him only. Some time in June, 1829, the same heavenly messenger appeared to three other men, with Joseph Smith, turned the metal leaves of the golden book before their eyes, explained to them what the book was, and bore testimony to its divine nature. None of these three men was related in any way to Joseph Smith. They all joined the Church when it was founded; but they all left the Church. Yet no one of them, at any time, whether while he was in the Church or out of it, could be made to deny the testimony which he bore after the visit of the angel. This testimony is found in every copy of the "Book of Mormon," and reads thus:

"Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people unto whom this work shall come, that we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this

record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken; and we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shown unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true; and it is marvelous in our eyes, nevertheless the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things. And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment-seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

OLIVER COWDERY,
DAVID WHITMER,
MARTIN HARRIS.

Besides the testimony of these three men, there is also the testimony of eight others. To the eight the plates of the "Book of Mormon" were shown by the

Prophet himself. They all handled the plates and examined them. Many of them afterwards forsook the Prophet and his teachings; but no one of them ever denied the testimony he had borne. This testimony is also found in every copy of the "Book of Mormon" and reads as follows:

"Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people unto whom this work shall come, that Joseph Smith, Jun., the translator of this work, has shown unto us the plates of which hath been spoken, which have the appearance of gold; and as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated, we did handle with our hands; and we also saw the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship. And this we bear record with words of soberness, that the said Smith has shown unto us, for we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety that the said Smith has got the plates of which we have spoken. And we give our names unto the world, to witness unto the world that which we have seen; and we lie not, God bearing witness of it.

CHRISTIAN WHITMER,
JACOB WHITMER,
PETER WHITMER, JUN.,
JOHN WHITMER,
HIRAM PAGE,
JOSEPH SMITH, SEN.,
HYRUM SMITH,
SAMUEL H. SMITH.

Thus far in the story of the Restoration two important facts appear. Nothing is done in haste; the

acts of the restoration are brought about in a slow, deliberate manner. There is no excitement, no frenzy, at any moment. Moreover, this third, important step—which confirms the two before it—is attested by eleven reputable witnesses. Their testimony has never been impeached. Many of them died outside the pale of the Church. Yet, on their death-beds, they affirmed stoutly as ever that their testimonies were true.^c

^cFor a further discussion of the testimony of the witnesses see chapter XX.

VII.

THE LESSER PRIESTHOOD.

When Martin Luther, after years of serious meditation in the monastery, became convinced of the doctrine of justification by faith, he proceeded to promulgate that doctrine among his countrymen. When, later, he became aroused by the monstrous traffic in indulgences, and through the indignation then aroused, finally led in a general revolt against the Catholic church, he proceeded with his friends to organize a new church. A large part of Teutonic Europe came under the influence of Luther's teaching.

It is noteworthy, however, that Martin Luther did not receive, nor did he apparently expect to receive, revelation from God. After years of the severest rigor, he came finally no longer to rely on his own "good works," but to trust in "justification by faith" alone. Yet, there had been given—either to him, or to another—no revelation revising or changing the well-known doctrine that faith without works is dead. Through a righteous indignation at the reckless claims made by the hawkers of indulgences, Luther was led to protest against the wicked practice of the Catholic church, and finally to establish a church of his own. Yet, he had received no special commission to institute the Church of Christ. His

protest against the Catholic church was unquestionably well taken; but he had received no appointment to establish a new church. The only authority he possessed was that bestowed upon him as a priest by the church from which he seceded. The church bearing his name is therefore man-appointed.

So it is also with all the Protestant creeds. As with Martin Luther, so it was with John Calvin, and the Presbyterian church; so it was with Henry VIII., "the English Pope," and "the Church of England as by law established;" so it was with Wesley who organized the independent sect of Methodists; and so it was with all the religious reformers from the first to the last. They recognized evils in the mother church. They appreciated the necessity of reform. But no one of them received divine appointment to accomplish the work they endeavored to do. Indeed, they held no authority whatever, except such authority as had been conferred upon them by the church which they declared to be apostate, and that authority certainly could not be called divine.

Judging then, from the many examples set before the time of Joseph Smith, we are justified in saying that he, too, might have organized an independent church of his own. He, too, recognized the evils in the Christian sects. He, too, felt the need of reform. Moreover, he had received divine manifestations; he had been told that the churches of the world were all corrupt, and he had translated by divine inspiration a volume of sacred records attested by eleven men of good repute. And moreover, still, the heavenly be--

ing who had visited him had specifically told him that God had a great work for him to do. Notwithstanding these many manifestations, however, Joseph Smith made no attempt to establish a new church, or to reform those churches already established. He had received no commission so to do. As yet, he had been given no authority to act in God's stead.

It was not until the fifteenth day of May, 1829, that the young Prophet received authority to officiate in some of the ordinances of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Joseph Smith and his scribe, Oliver Cowdery, had been engaged as usual on the translation of the sacred plates. On that day, they happened upon a passage referring to baptism. Since they knew nothing of the ordinance they became eager to understand. They went out into the wood to pray for light. Together they knelt upon the sod. United in their one great desire, they pleaded with the God of heaven to give them understanding. "While we were thus employed," writes the Prophet in his simple way, "praying and calling upon the Lord, a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us, saying:

"Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi

do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness."^a

The messenger who appeared thus to Joseph and Oliver said that he was John the Baptist, and that he held the keys of the Aaronic priesthood from the dispensation of Christ. He explained further that this priesthood had not the power of laying on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. He commanded them to baptize each other, and to re-ordain each other after the pattern set them by him. Immediately Joseph and Oliver went to attend to the holy ordinance. First the Prophet baptized Oliver, then Oliver baptized the Prophet. The Prophet then laid his hands upon Oliver's head and ordained him to the Aaronic priesthood; and afterwards, Oliver ordained the Prophet. Both of them received thereupon glorious manifestations from heaven. They prophesied of things that were to be. They were filled with the Holy Ghost. And thus was consummated another act in the story of the Restoration.

→ And what was this Priesthood restored by the heavenly messenger, John the Baptist? Priesthood is the authority to act in God's stead. Since the powers of God are infinite, so also must His priesthood be infinite. Therefore, what a man may or may not do in representing God, will depend upon the degree of authority he has received from the Great Master. One who has been commissioned with great authority may undertake great responsibilities for God; whereas one who has been commis-

^a"History of the Church," Vol. I, p. 15.

sioned with but little, can do but little. The principle of authority will not permit a man to attempt responsibilities greater than his priesthood, though he may feel himself otherwise competent to do them fully as well as does the man who holds the necessary authority. Thus divine authority—or priesthood—becomes a power highly to be respected.

Now, the Holy Priesthood has two divisions—the Lesser and the Greater. It was the Lesser Priesthood that John the Baptist conferred upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. It is also called the Aaronic Priesthood since Aaron was the great representative of old bearing this authority. The powers and limitations of this division of priesthood—or Divine Authority—are indicated in the words of ordination and the instructions of John the Baptist to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

First, the Priesthood of Aaron holds the keys of the ministering of angels. One who has received this degree of authority has the right to receive revelation and instruction from the angels of heaven. They may minister to him, inspire him, and guide him, in his labors. Moreover, the authority of this priesthood may call down upon man the ministration of holy angels when it shall be necessary so to do.

Secondly, the Priesthood of Aaron holds the keys of the gospel of repentance. One who holds this degree of authority may cry repentance to his fellow-men. He may preach the Gospel of Jesus to them that they may follow in His ways.

Moreover, the Priesthood of Aaron holds the keys

of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. The preaching of one having authority may be effective. Those hearing it may be converted. They may confess their past sins and repent of them with a Godly sorrow. It becomes necessary then to administer the ordinance of baptism to them. This, one who holds the authority of the Aaronic priesthood may do. By virtue of the delegated power which he holds, he may lead the candidate for baptism into the water, and immerse him in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Finally, the Priesthood of Aaron may be said to hold the keys of all temporal ministrations. Those holding this authority may look after the needs of the poor, and the afflicted. They may care for the temporal welfare of the Church. They may attend to such duties as will make for the peace and comfort of worshipers. And they may attend to the sacred ordinance of the sacrament, or the Lord's Supper.

Now, what is the significance of this glorious vision of John the Baptist? It means, first, that man must have authority to act for God; secondly, that the religious world in the time of this vision had no authority to act for God. It is unreasonable to suppose that any one should presume, without authority, to take another's place in the business affairs of this world; or that any one would, without protest, permit another to usurp his place and authority in the business transactions of this world. And if this is so with finite men, how much more unready will the God of heaven be to approve His creatures' usurping

His power and authority? How displeasing will it not be to him that one to whom He has never delegated authority of any kind or degree, shall presume to represent Him, and officiate in His name? Certainly God will no more recognize the acts of men who arrogate authority and dominion, than will an earthly monarch.

But the Priesthood held by men of old is not possessed by the sectarian churches of today. The Lesser, or Aaronic, Priesthood finds no place in their creeds. John the Baptist would have had no need to ordain Joseph and Oliver, had the Aaronic Priesthood been held by anyone on earth. All those who assumed, then, to organize churches, both before and after the appearance of John the Baptist in this age of the world, did so without the necessary authority. These two men—Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery—were the only mortals on earth at that time who held any degree of Priesthood—Divine Authority—from God. And the priesthood that they held did not yet give them power to organize the Church of Christ or to confer the Holy Ghost.

These facts are apparent, then: In answer to earnest prayer, a heavenly being giving his name as John the Baptist appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery; he conferred upon them the Aaronic Priesthood, which holds certain definite keys, or powers; the possession of Priesthood—or Divine Authority—is absolutely necessary to one who would officiate in God's stead; the religious world at large has lost entirely the Aaronic Priesthood; with this

order of Priesthood conferred upon them Joseph and Oliver became authorized to perform certain duties for God; but even now they could not officiate in the higher ordinances of the Gospel, therefore they could not yet establish the Church of Christ with authority.

VIII.

THE HIGHER PRIESTHOOD.

In the days of Abraham, there lived in Palestine a great king and "priest of the most high God," named Melchizedek. Melchizedek was king of Salem. To him Abraham paid tithes of all that he had. Now, Melchizedek was approved of God, and was ordained a high priest after the order of the Son of God; "which order came," we are told, "not by man, nor the will of man; neither by father nor mother; neither by beginning of days nor end of years; but of God."^a And ever afterwards, Melchizedek was distinguished as a great high priest.

In after years the Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God—the Priesthood that Melchizedek held as a great high priest—came to be named after Melchizedek. In the one hundred tenth psalm, King David bursts forth in triumphant praise of the Lord who is to come. "The Lord hath sworn," he says, "and will not repent, 'Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.'"^b Again, a thousand years later, Paul revives the memory of Melchizedek in a remarkable argument for the saving power of the Lord's high-priesthood. "Though he were a

^aHoly Scriptures, Inspired Version, Gen. 14:28; Compare Heb. 7:1-3.

^bPsalms 110:4.

Son," writes the great apostle, "yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek."^c So, from generation to generation, among the ancients, an order of priesthood called the Priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek was undoubtedly well-known. It was this priesthood—or Divine Authority—by virtue of which Jesus Himself operated. It represented the power delegated to Him from God the Father.

Moreover, it was the authority of this same priesthood by virtue of which the apostles of Jesus, and all the divinely-appointed disciples, officiated in Jesus' name. At some time during the second year of His public ministry, Jesus went up into a mountain, and called to Him certain of His disciples. He ordained twelve to be His apostles and special witnesses, and gave them power similar to His own.^d When the labors of the ministry became too extensive for the twelve alone, the Lord appointed other seventy and sent them two and two into every city.^e The authority of judgment was committed to the Son; and He appointed to His disciples a kingdom, as His Father had appointed to Him, that they might judge the twelve tribes of Israel.^f To one of the apostles the Savior gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven,

^cRead Hebrews, chs. 5, 6, 7.

^dMark 3:13 14.

^eLuke 10.

^fLuke 22:29 30.

that whatsoever he should bind on earth should be bound in heaven.^g Afterwards, he gave the same binding and loosing power to all the twelve.^h Then, after His crucifixion, the Lord appeared again to the eleven and conveyed to them a commission similar to that on which He Himself had acted:

“As my father hath sent me, even so send I you.”ⁱ

But the power and priesthood of Jesus was unquestionably that known by the name of Melchizedek. He was called of God, says St. Paul, to that order of priesthood; he was appointed of God “a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” Then, when He imparted to His chosen disciples the authority that He held Himself, it cannot be otherwise construed than that He conferred upon them the Holy Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

What became of that priesthood after the passing of the apostles? During their ministry we have repeated references to the officers divinely appointed to carry on the work of the Church. The apostles themselves, as they traveled from church to church, ordained elders and set apart officers for the continuance of the great gospel work. And, of course, they could impart only what they had received. They had received the Holy Priesthood called after the name of Melchizedek; this priesthood, then, they conferred upon those appointed to preside and to labor in the Church. Indeed, it follows but natur-

^gMatt. 16:19.

^hMatt. 18:18.

ⁱJohn 20:21.

ally that one could not rightfully officiate in the Church unless he had been divinely called and appointed by this priesthood.

After the passing of the apostles, however, the Priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek, like that of Aaron, became lost. The officers of the priesthood dropped out one by one. At the present day, neither the Melchizedekian nor the Aaronic Priesthood is recognized in the sectarian world as having existence even, let alone their being essential to the complete organization of the Church. In a time of the restitution of all things, then,—such as was spoken of by the holy prophets—the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek as well as that of Aaron must be restored to the earth.

John the Baptist had promised that the Higher Priesthood should be restored to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Not long after his own visitation the promise was fulfilled. Joseph and Oliver were in the wilderness on the Susquehanna river. To them appeared the ancient apostles Peter, James, and John, who declared that they possessed the keys of the kingdom, and of the dispensation of the Fulness of Times. They laid their hands upon Joseph and Oliver, conferred upon them the Holy Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, ordained them to be apostles and special witnesses of Jesus the Lord, and bestowed upon them the keys of power which they themselves possessed.^j Therefore, Joseph and Oliver became known as Apostles of Jesus Christ, the first

^j"History of the Church," Vol. I, pp. 40, 41.

and second elders of the Church.^k In after years, the Prophet Joseph wrote ecstatically of the event, saying:

“And again, what do we hear? Glad tidings from Cumorah! Moroni, an angel from heaven, declaring the fulfillment of the prophets—the book to be revealed. A voice of the Lord in the wilderness of Fayette, Seneca County, declaring the three witnesses to bear record of the book. The voice of Michael on the banks of the Susquehanna, detecting the devil when he appeared as an angel of light. The voice of Peter, James and John in the wilderness between Harmony, Susquehanna county, and Colesville, Broome county, on the Susquehanna river, declaring themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom, and of the dispensation of the fulness of times.”^l

And Oliver Cowdery, too, bears record of the same marvelous event. He says in a signed statement:

“John the Baptist, holding the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood; Peter, James and John, holding the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood have also ministered for those who shall be heirs of salvation, and with these administrations, ordained men to the same Priesthood. These Priesthoods with their authority, are now and must continue to be in the body of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. * * * Accept assurances, dear

^kDoc. and Cov. 20:2, 3; 18:9.

^lDoc. and Cov. 128:20.

brother, of the unfeigned prayer of him who, in connection with Joseph, the Seer, was blessed with the above administrations."^m

This statement was written in 1849, nearly twenty years after the event, and nearly five years after the martyrdom of the Prophet.

And so was consummated another act in the great drama of the Restoration. The chosen prophet, Joseph Smith, and his divinely-appointed associate, Oliver Cowdery, possessed now the higher order of priesthood—the Priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek. After many centuries the priesthood of the great king was restored again to the earth finally, never again to be taken away while the earth shall stand.

How does this Higher Priesthood differ from the Lesser? Briefly, the difference is mainly one of degree. Both are divisions of the great Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God. But the Lesser Priesthood deals with lesser, and temporal things; whereas the Higher Priesthood deals with spiritual things. Says the Lord in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph:

“The power and authority of the Higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the Church—to have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven—to have the heavens opened unto them—to commune with the general assembly and Church of the first born, and to enjoy the communion and

^m“History of the Church,” Vol. I, p. 42, footnote.

presence of God the Father, and Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant."ⁿ

It appears, then, that one holding the Priesthood of Melchizedek may lay on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost; he may administer to the sick that they may be restored; he may rebuke evil and cast out devils in the name of Jesus the Christ; he may bless, and confirm, and anoint with holy oil; he may, in short, call down the richest blessings of heaven in his administration,—for he holds “the keys of all the spiritual blessings.”

He may possess the rights and powers of revelation, to learn the mysteries of heaven, to look into the heavens themselves, and to commune with heavenly beings. He may enjoy the communion, and the very presence of God the Father and of Jesus Christ. Moreover, one holding the Higher Priesthood has power and authority over all the lesser offices of the Church. These are great and wonderful blessings. Yet, they are really no greater than one should expect to find operative in the true Church of Christ. For how can a church fulfill the measure of its existence unless it possess the very powers here ascribed to the Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek?

It is really a matter of wonder that Joseph Smith, an unlearned youth—for he was less than twenty-four years of age at the time of the restoration of the Melchizedekian Priesthood—should have felt himself unauthorized fully to represent God until

ⁿDoc. and Cov. 107:18, 19.

the two orders of priesthood were conferred upon him. The so-called reformers were nearly all learned men. They knew the scriptures not only in translation but in the original tongue. They knew, too, the history and the customs of Israel and surrounding nations. Of most of these things, Joseph Smith as a young man was ignorant. Yet, the Protestant reformers never once recognized the necessity of possessing the old order of Divine Authority. They read the scriptures and claimed to understand them; some even translated the Holy Bible; yet, not one of them seemed to comprehend the meaning of Priesthood, nor the necessity of Divine Authority. To Joseph Smith alone, of all the modern religious leaders, belongs the credit of waiting till he was commissioned before he attempted to act in God's stead. It is a striking testimony of his divine inspiration.

IX.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST.

Empowered with the authority of both the Lesser and the Higher Priesthood, Joseph Smith was in a position to act in all things for the Great Giver of that authority. Indeed, it would appear that there was nothing, in righteousness, that Joseph Smith might not do as the representative of God. Yet, he waited patiently, always, to receive God's word before he ventured to act in any important matter. During these early days of his experience, enemies continued to array themselves against him, and persecution waxed fiercer and more frequent. But the young Prophet was not required to stand absolutely alone. Not only enemies, but friends also increased in numbers. It was very generally known, long before the publication of the "Book of Mormon," that Joseph was engaged in the translation of such a book. Many men whose curiosity, and interest, had been aroused, sought out the Prophet, and learned from his own lips the nature of his strange message to the world. These men remained in most cases among the Prophet's staunchest friends. They could not doubt the sincerity of that testimony which alone withstood maligning and persecution. They could not break the impregnable testimony to the divine authenticity of the "Book of Mormon." They could not controvert the sober affirmations of the two men who, without worldly gain in view, declared that

they had received by special ordination divine authority from heaven to re-establish the Church of Jesus Christ. And, fortunately for the young seer, his own family were among those who began early to repose faith in him. His brother Samuel H. Smith was, according to the recorded history, the third person in this dispensation to be baptized; and shortly thereafter Hyrum Smith, another brother, also accepted the truth. Thus, the followers of the Prophet increased in number, and his friends multiplied. There was, however, no organization by which they were bound together.

Near the middle of the year 1829, before the Higher Priesthood was restored, the Prophet and his friends became anxious to effect a permanent organization. The heavenly messengers that had visited the Prophet had promised him that the true Church of Christ should be established in due time. And it was expedient—even necessary—that there should be an organization effected. It may be urged that a person can be as good out of an organization as in it, and that the mere fact of organization can produce no improvement either spiritually or otherwise. But there can be no system where there is no organization. There can be no one particularly to look to, where there is no organization. There can be no division of responsibility where there is no organization. There can be no order where there is no organization. Order, it has been said, is a fundamental law of heaven. But organization means order. We have not space here to delve into

the philosophy of organization; but it is surely evident to every one that if we had not organization, the world—physically, spiritually, mentally, socially—would still be in the same chaotic condition it was in when God first said, “Let there be light.” In order to accomplish the purposes of God, then, it was necessary to do more than merely to restore the authority to act in His name. It became necessary to effect an organization.

Near the middle of the year 1829, the Prophet and his friends became anxious to realize the promise of John the Baptist that they should receive the Higher Priesthood, and to effect a permanent organization. They assembled in Peter Whitmer’s house to beg of the Lord what they so earnestly desired. “And here,” writes the Prophet, “to our unspeakable satisfaction, did we realize the truth of the Savior’s promise—‘Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you’—for we had not long been engaged in solemn and fervent prayer, when the word of the Lord came unto us in the chamber.”^a It is undoubtedly this manifestation that the Prophet has in mind when he writes in an address to the Church, “And again what do we hear? * * * The voice of God in the chamber of old Father Whitmer, in Fayette, Seneca County.”

The voice of the Lord in this assembly gave to the Prophet many important directions as to how he should proceed in organizing the Church. He was

^a“History of the Church,” Vol. 1, p. 60.

^bDoc. and Cov. 128:21.

instructed to ordain Oliver Cowdery an elder in the Church of Jesus Christ. Then, Oliver Cowdery should ordain Joseph; and afterwards they should ordain others, as they should be directed by revelation. These ordinations, however, were to be deferred until such time as all those who had been baptized could be assembled in a general meeting. And even then, the young Prophet, to whom these great revelations had been made, should not force himself upon his followers; but they were to show by free and voluntary vote whether or not they were willing to receive him as their spiritual teacher and leader. After the vote had been taken, these first Elders of the Church were to bless bread and break it with those assembled, and bless wine and drink it with them. Then, such as should be indicated by the Spirit of God should be ordained to the priesthood, and those who had been baptized should be confirmed by the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.^c In order further to instruct his servants, the Lord gave in addition a revelation to Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer, explaining further the nature of their calling to the priesthood, making known that there should be twelve apostles called at some future time, and imparting other instructions relative to the building up of the Church of Christ, according to the fulness of the Gospel.^d

Not very long afterwards, another revelation was given specifying the day on which the organization

^c"History of the Church, Vol. I, p. 61.

^dDoc. and Cov. sec. 18.

should be effected, and outlining the duties of Church members. The Lord, in this revelation, says:

“The rise of the Church of Christ in these last days, being one thousand eight hundred and thirty years since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh, it being regularly organized and established agreeable to the laws of our country, by the will and commandments of God, in the fourth month, and on the sixth day of the month, which is called April.”^e

Then the revelation proceeds to explain doctrine, and to define the duties of those holding the priesthood, also of lay members. Thus was the day fixed by divine revelation when the Church should be organized.

Accordingly on Tuesday, the sixth of April, 1830, Joseph Smith and his friends met at the house of Peter Whitmer, Sr., in Fayette Seneca County, New York. The laws of the State of New York required that there should be at least six members of any religious body to effect an organization. There were already more than six baptized followers of Joseph Smith. Since, however, no more than six were required, only six were chosen for the purpose of organization. They were, Oliver Cowdery, Joseph Smith, Jr., Hyrum Smith, Peter Whitmer, Jr., Samuel H. Smith and David Whitmer.^f The Prophet writes:

“Having opened the meeting by solemn prayer to

^eDoc. and Cov. 20:1.

^f“History of the Church,” Vol. I, p. 76, footnote.

our heavenly Father, we proceeded, according to previous commandment, to call on our brethren to know whether they accepted us as their teachers in the things of the kingdom of God, and whether they were satisfied that we should proceed and be organized as a Church, according to said commandment which we had received. To these several propositions they consented by a unanimous vote. I then laid my hands upon Oliver Cowdery, and ordained him an Elder of the 'Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints;' after which he ordained me also to the office of an Elder of said Church. We then took bread, blessed it, and brake it with them; also wine, blessed it, and drank it with them. We then laid our hands on each individual member of the Church present, that they might receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and be confirmed members of the Church of Christ. The Holy Ghost was poured out upon us to a very great degree—some prophesied, whilst we all praised the Lord, and rejoiced exceedingly."^g

While the members were thus enjoying the manifestations of the Holy Ghost, another revelation pertaining to the organization of the Church was given to the Prophet Joseph. It is preserved in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants as section twenty-one.

"We now proceeded to call out and ordain some others of the brethren to different offices of the Priesthood, according as the Spirit manifested unto us; and after a happy time spent in witnessing and feeling for ourselves the powers and blessings of the

^g"History of the Church," Vol. I, pp. 75-79.

Holy Ghost, through the grace of God bestowed upon us, we dismissed with the pleasing knowledge that we were now individually members of, and acknowledged of God, 'The Church of Jesus Christ,' organized in accordance with commandments and revelations given by Him to ourselves to the order of the Church as recorded in the New Testament."^h

Thus was accomplished, fully ten years after the glorious vision of the Father and the Son, the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was the consummation of another great act in the drama of the Restoration. Gradually, the story has been building up to this climax. Gradually, the chosen servants of God have been trained, and prepared for the great responsibility of organization. Gradually, the "marvelous work and a wonder" has itself grown and made friends, that it might bear fruit in membership. And now the number of those who can testify to the divine origin of the great work is materially increased. It is not Joseph Smith alone; nor is it he alone with his associate Oliver; nor is it they alone with the three witnesses; nor yet is it they alone with the eight witnesses. It is now the Church membership. On them was poured the abundance of the Holy Ghost this momentous day. And though there were but six in the legal organization, all those assembled experienced the rich blessings of the Spirit. Moreover, from that day forth, the Church began to grow rapidly. On that very day, indeed, many became converted and were baptized, among others the

^h"History of the Church," Vol. I, p. 79.

father and the mother of the Prophet. At about the same time, Martin Harris, also, and Orrin Porter Rockwell received baptism. And thus the Church has increased from six to tens; from tens to tens of thousands, and from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands,—all bearing witness that Joseph Smith received divine authority and special appointment to establish anew the Church of Christ upon the earth.

X.

THE GOSPEL ORDINANCES. *

In the preceding chapter it was said that order is a fundamental law of heaven. Without order there is no system. Without order there is no method. Without order, in short, chaos is come again.

Having then, organized the Church—and organization, it was said, means order—the God of heaven would certainly require that all things pertaining to Church membership and to Church ritual should be done in an orderly way. He would certainly restore the ancient rules and ordinances for the accomplishment of certain ends—not that obedience to the rules, nor the performance of the ordinances, would alone bring salvation; but that the required observance of the prescribed word would establish order.

There is a right way and a wrong way to do all things. It is the following of the right way that brings reward. For example, a company of soldiers is ordered by their captain to charge up the steep side of a hill and engage with the enemy at the top. Any other side of the hill is more easy of ascent than the one designated by the captain. In fact, that particular one seems almost inaccessible. The soldiers, therefore, act upon their own judgments and desires. They scatter, and charge up the hill from all sides. Of course, they may all come finally to the top of the

hill; but they come in broken line and are easily repelled. The day is lost to them. But why? Is not one ascent as good as another? Surely, when one is climbing for pleasure. But when one is acting under organization, there can be but one ascent. The soldiers who chose the other way, reached the summit of the hill, but in disorder, broken, and disunited. Moreover, by choosing their own road, they missed the very point and purpose for which the captain ordered them to charge together up the steepest way. And what was even worse, by breaking to follow their own desires, they brought confusion, chaos even, into their ranks.

It may be that the appointed way will not appear to be our way. But it is for the Master of the organization, for Him who has established order, to say how we shall proceed, that order, peace and harmony may persist. With a Church organization restored we should expect to find restored also the ordinances and ceremonies divinely prescribed for the continuance of the organization.

First, then, to belong to the Church of Christ, it becomes necessary to make covenant with Him in His chosen way. That way is baptism. It is the outward ordinance in covenant of the new condition existing between the Savior and the saved. This it was that Paul had in mind when he wrote to the Romans: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up

from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."^a And again he wrote to the Galatians: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."^b It is evident, then, that baptism is the ordinance of initiation into the Church of Christ; and further, that that ordinance must be by immersion since it is in the likeness of the burial of Christ.

When John the Baptist, in the glorious appearance to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, restored to them the Priesthood of Aaron, he explained that it held the keys "of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins."^c With this priesthood conferred upon them, Joseph and Oliver became endued with authority to baptize in the name of the Father. John the Baptist instructed them to baptize each other. Afterwards, as we have already learned, they were instructed that they should baptize all who wished to join with them in the Church of Christ. Before the day the Church was organized, further specific instructions were given concerning the sacred ordinance of baptism.

"And again, by way of commandment to the Church concerning the manner of baptism," we read

^aRom. 6:3-5.

^bGal. 3:26, 27.

^cDoc. and Cov. sec. 13.

in an early revelation, "all those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the Church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his Church."^d

"Baptism," says the Lord further, "is to be administered in the following manner unto all those who repent:—The person who is called of God, and has authority from Jesus to baptize, shall go down into the water with the person who has presented him or herself for baptism, and shall say, calling him or her by name—Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Then shall he immerse him or her in the water, and come forth again out of the water."^e

After being baptized, the new convert received anciently the gift of the Holy Ghost. "Men and brethren," cried the assembled Jews on the day of Pentecost, "what shall we do?" Peter answered, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."^f And this gift

^dDoc. and Cov. 20:37.

^eDoc. and Cov. 20:72-74.

^fActs 2:37-39.

of the Holy Ghost was conferred by the laying on of hands of those having authority so to do. At one time, when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had received the Gospel they sent to Samaria Peter and John. These two apostles prayed with the new converts that they might receive the Holy Ghost. "Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." There was present one Simon, a magician. "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money."^g

It was to be expected, then, that, having restored the proper form of baptism, the Lord would restore also the proper way of conferring the gift of the Holy Ghost. Accordingly, the word of God declares, in the revelation given during the organization meeting of the Church, that—"An apostle is an elder, and it is his calling to baptize. * * * And to confirm those who are baptized into the church, by the laying on of hands for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, according to the scriptures."^h And again, the Lord says to His elders: "Ye shall remember the church articles and covenants to keep them; and whoso having faith you shall confirm in

^gActs 8:14-20.

^hDoc. and Cov. 20:38-41.

my church by the laying on of the hands, and I will bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost upon them.”ⁱ

Thus were the essential ordinances of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost restored in this dispensation. Baptism, however, is applicable only to those who have reached years of accountability. It may be administered only to those who are capable of understanding, of believing, of repenting, and of confessing. This, little children cannot do; nor have they need so to do, for little children are without sin.

Once, the devoted parents of Israel brought their children to the Master, that He might touch them. The disciples, careful of their beloved Master, rebuked the parents; but He said in His divine way: “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”^j

These, then, who were young and without sin—like whom are those in the kingdom of God—the Master did not lead into the waters of baptism. He took them in His arms and blessed them. And in accordance with this pattern, the following instructions were given to the Prophet, respecting the manner of receiving little children: “Every member of

ⁱDoc. and Cov. 33:14,15.

^jMark 10:13-16.

the Church of Christ having children, is to bring them unto the elders before the church, who are to lay their hands upon them in the name of Jesus Christ, and bless them in his name.”^k

Again, in the same comprehensive revelation given at the organization of the Church, the Lord gave specific directions for the administration of the sacrament. As He Himself did when He met with His disciples at the Last Supper, so He would have His people continue to do. The Lord says in the modern revelation: “It is expedient that the church meet together often, to partake of bread and wine in remembrance of the Lord Jesus; and the elder or priest shall administer it—he shall kneel with the church and call upon the Father in solemn prayer, saying—‘O God, the eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.’”

Afterwards the wine should be administered in the following way: “He shall take the cup also, and say—‘O God, the eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this wine to the souls of all those who drink of it, that they may do it in remembrance of the blood of

^kDoc. and Cov 20:70.

thy Son, which was shed for them; that they may witness unto thee, O God the eternal Father, that they do always remember him, that they may have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.'"¹

Not only, however, was the manner of performing the ordinance thus explained, but important instructions were given also to the saints that they should not partake of this Holy Sacrament unworthily. For, as said the Apostle Paul, "whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord."^m Moreover, the Lord gave directions also as to what should be used in the ordinance. The Prophet Joseph was on his way, one evening, to purchase wine for the sacrament. Suddenly, he was met by a heavenly messenger, and received the following instructions:

"Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Lord, your God, and your Redeemer, whose word is quick and powerful. For, behold, I say unto you, that it mattereth not what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, when ye partake of the sacrament, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory; remembering unto the Father my body which was laid down for you, and my blood which was shed for the remission of your sins: wherefore a commandment I give unto you, that you shall not purchase wine neither strong drink of your enemies, wherefore you shall partake of none, except it is made new among

¹Doc. and Cov. 20:75-79.

^mI Cor. 11:27.

you; yea, in this my Father's kingdom, which shall be built up on the earth."ⁿ For this reason, water came to be used by the saints in the ordinance of the sacrament, and has been in general use ever since.

Finally, we may notice one other important ordinance restored through the ministry of Joseph Smith. Anciently, the Apostle James wrote to the saints^e "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."^o

In like manner, the Lord directed the latter-day Prophet, on the ninth of February, 1831, in the presence of twelve elders of the Church. Said the Lord in revelation: "Whosoever among you are sick and have not faith to be healed, but believe, shall be nourished with all tenderness, with herbs and mild food, and that not by the hand of an enemy. And the elders of the church, two or more, shall be called, and shall pray for and lay their hands upon them in my name; and if they die they shall die unto me, and if they live they shall live unto me."^p Hence, it is the custom in the Church to pray for the sick, and to administer to them, anointing them with oil, and laying hands upon them in faith; and many thousands

ⁿDoc. and Cov. 27:1-4.

^eJas. 5:14, 15.

^pDoc. and Cov. 42:43.

bear witness that the promises of the Lord have been bountifully fulfilled in this modern age.

Thus, through the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the essential outward ordinances of the Gospel, lost long ago through the great apostasy, were restored for the blessing and the salvation of the children of men.

XI.

THE PLAN OF GOVERNMENT.

At the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, on April 6th, 1830, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were accepted and unanimously sustained as the spiritual teachers and leaders of the Church. It appears that there was no further attempt at that time to perfect the organization. Indeed, while the Church numbered but few members it was unnecessary to have more officers than those indicated. The few members were banded together for mutual benefit; and for the time being, a leader was all they needed. In the revelation given during the organization meeting, a recorder is also named, and the official position of the young Prophet is pointed out. The Lord declares:

“Behold, there shall be a record kept among you, and in it thou [i. e., Joseph Smith] shalt be called a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church through the will of God the Father, and the grace of your Lord Jesus Christ, being inspired of the Holy Ghost to lay the foundation thereof, and to build it up unto the most holy faith.”^a

It was not long, however, before the Church grew to such proportions that more working officers were

^aDoc. and Cov. 22:1, 2.

needed than those two or three first appointed. As it was in the days of the Savior, when He called the twelve, and the seventy, and other workers, so it was in latter days. The phenomenal growth of the Church demanded the completing of the organization. And "completing" of the organization is all that was needed. The nature and extent of the organization were themselves already made plain. In the invaluable revelation on Church government,^b the officers of the priesthood are named in order. There the Lord speaks of apostles, high priests, elders, bishops, priests, teachers, deacons, high counselors, and so forth. At an earlier date even than that of the revelation on Church government, the Lord made known to the Prophet Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer, that there should be in due time twelve apostles.^c But the plan of Church organization and government was perfected gradually as the growth of the Church demanded.

At a conference of the Church held at Amherst, Ohio, January 25, 1832, and again at a general council held at Independence, Missouri, April 26, 1832, the Prophet Joseph was acknowledged and sustained as the President of the High Priesthood. The Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, consisting of three members, was not effected, however, until March 18, 1833. Ten days before, on March 8th, the Prophet had received a revelation

^bDoc. and Cov. sec. 20.

^cDoc. and Cov. sec. 18.

in which it was commanded that he should continue in the ministry and the presidency. Moreover, the Lord said:

“Verily, I say unto thy brethren, Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams, their sins are forgiven them also, and they are accounted as equal with thee in holding the keys of this last kingdom. * * * that through your [the Prophet’s] administration they may receive the word, and through their administration, the word may go forth unto the ends of the earth, unto the Gentiles first, and then, behold, and lo, they shall turn unto the Jews.”^d

Accordingly, on the eighteenth of the month, Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams were ordained to be first and second counselors to President Joseph Smith. Thus was the earthly presidency of the Church established in the dispensation of the fulness of times.

Other quorums and positions of presidency were likewise organized as need demanded. On December 18, 1833, Joseph Smith, Sr., father of the Prophet, was ordained patriarch of the Church, by the Prophet Joseph, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams. And less than two years later it was decreed in a special revelation on Priesthood that—“It is the duty of the Twelve, in all large branches of the church, to ordain evengelical ministers (patriarchs) as they shall be designated unto them by revelation. The order of this Priesthood was confirmed to be handed down from father to

^dDoc. and Cov. 90:6-9.

son, and rightly belongs to the literal descendants of the chosen seed, to whom the promises were made.”^e

Little less than two years after the organization of the Presidency of the Church, the promise that there would be appointed a quorum of twelve apostles was fulfilled. It was Sunday, February 8, 1835. Brigham and Joseph Young had come to visit the Prophet. They sang to him, and worshiped together. The Spirit of God was poured out upon them, and the Prophet declared that he wanted to see together the brethren who had gone to Missouri the summer before in Zion’s Camp.^f He had a

^eDoc. and Cov. 107:39, 40.

^fZion’s Camp was the name given to a company of volunteers who set out from the Eastern States to carry assistance to the Saints in Missouri. In the fall of the year 1833, the Saints who lived in Jackson county, Missouri, were driven from that county by a lawless mob, and all their lands were confiscated. The exiles found refuge in Clay county. From there, Parley P. Pratt and Lyman Wight were sent to Kirtland to report to the Prophet the condition of the Saints in the West. The Prophet was distracted by the news. He enquired of the Lord to learn how Zion might be redeemed, and received a revelation in which he was instructed to call for volunteers from the strength of the Church—young men and middle-aged—to march to Zion to redeem it. This band of volunteers was not to exceed five hundred, nor was it to consist of fewer than one hundred (Doc. and Cov. 103). Immediately the brethren in Kirtland began to prepare for the work of redemption. Recruiting officers and solicitors were sent to all the branches of the Church. By the latter part of April, 1834, volunteers began to assemble in Kirtland. On May first, the first advance was made in the eventful thousand-miles march. A little more than twenty men, with four baggage wagons, proceeded from Kirtland to New Portage. Not many days later, the Prophet with the rest of the recruits at Kirtland, joined the camp at New Portage. There the now famous Zion’s Camp was organized into

blessing for them, he said. Accordingly, a meeting was appointed for Saturday, February 14, 1835. When the men of Zion's Camp were assembled, the Prophet addressed them at length. He declared that there was a divine purpose in the trials and hardships endured in the march to Zion and return. In the afternoon session of the meeting, the Prophet directed that the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon should proceed to select twelve men to be ordained apostles of the Lord Jesus. Accordingly, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris were blessed by the presidency of the Church. Then they proceeded to select from among the men of Zion's Camp twelve men to be ordained apostles of the Lord Jesus. The twelve men were named in the following order: Lyman E. Johnson, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, David W. Patten, Luke S. Johnson, William E. M'Lellin, John F. Boynton, Orson Pratt, William Smith, Thomas B. Marsh, and Parley P. Pratt. The first

companies of twelve, with a suitable division of responsibility for a long march. From there the march proceeded through the states of Indiana and Illinois, picking up recruits on the way, until there were in the company two hundred five strong and faithful men, with twenty-five baggage wagons. Naturally, such a march of a thousand miles was full of trial and hardship. It was a march well designed to test the faith and the characters of those who made it. Some were found wanting in the sterling qualities necessary for the leaders of a Chosen People. Others never lost sight of the noble purpose of their mission, and therefore retained their spirits unruffled till the last. It was fitting that such men as these should be chosen later to lead Zion. Zion's Camp was disbanded June twenty-fifth, 1834, at Rush Creek, Clay county, Missouri.

three named were then ordained to the apostleship that same day, February 14, 1835. The next six were ordained the following day, Sunday, February 15. Parley P. Pratt was ordained on February 21. And Orson Pratt and Thomas B. Marsh, who were absent on missions, were ordained in April, 1835. Thus was the quorum of Twelve apostles—like that appointed by the Savior during His personal ministry—again organized in this dispensation.^g

At some time before the calling of the Twelve, the Prophet had seen in vision, not only the organization of the quorum of apostles, but also the organization of the quorums of seventies.^h The Church had made such phenomenal progress, and the missionary labor was so extensive, that more busy workers were needed even after the calling of the Twelve. Therefore, on the 28th of February, 1835, the Church assembled in council, began to select from the faithful ones left from the Zion's Camp expedition, certain men to become Seventies. Seven men were ordained presidents of the quorum, and sixty-three others, members. These Seventies, said the Prophet, "are to constitute traveling quorums, to go

^gAt a grand council held May second, 1835, the newly chosen apostles were arranged according to seniority. The official organization of the first quorum of apostles was then as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Thomas B. Marsh | 7 Parley P. Pratt |
| 2 David W. Patten | 8 Luke S. Johnson |
| 3 Brigham Young | 9 William Smith |
| 4 Heber C. Kimball | 10 Orson Pratt |
| 5 Orson Hyde | 11 John F. Boynton |
| 6 William E. McLellin | 12 Lyman E. Johnson |

^h"History of the Church," Vol. II, pp. 202, 182.

into all the earth whithersoever the Twelve Apostles shall send them.”ⁱ

The quorums of authority thus far re-established may be considered, in a way, as dealing primarily with the spiritual affairs of the Church. Even the First Presidency, while they may advise in temporal matters, and take active part in them, seem to have it as their first duty to stand between God and the Church, administering in spiritual things. It was not the intention of the Lord, however, to provide only for the spiritual welfare of His people. The temporal welfare of the people was also necessary to the satisfactory fulfillment of their missions upon the earth. Therefore, the Lord restored also the authorities whose principal duty it is to take care of temporal affairs. In a revelation given February 4, 1831, while the Prophet was visiting in Kirtland, Ohio, the Lord said :

“I have called my servant Edward Partridge, and give a commandment, that he should be appointed by the voice of the church, and ordained a bishop unto the church, to leave his merchandise and to spend all his time in the labors of the church: to see to all things as it shall be appointed unto him, in my laws in the day that I shall give them.”^j

Edward Partridge was a prosperous merchant of Kirtland. The Prophet said of him, “He was a pattern of piety, and one of the Lord’s great men, known by his steadfastness and patient endurance

ⁱ“History of the Church,” Vol. II, p. 202.

^jDoc. and Cov. 41:9, 10.

to the end.”^k Elder Partridge accepted the call of the Lord, forsook his merchandise, and was ordained on the very day of the revelation, the first bishop of the Church. And in the following November, several elders came to the Prophet seeking to know the will of the Lord concerning them. The Prophet received for them a revelation, containing not only instructions to them, but also “certain items * * in addition to the covenants and commandments.” There, among other things, the Lord says: “There remaineth hereafter, in the due time of the Lord, other bishops to be set apart unto the church, to minister even according to the first.”^k

The following month, Newel K. Whitney was called by revelation to be bishop over the Church in Kirtland.^l Since that day, other bishops have been called as need has arisen, until there are in the Church at the present writing more than seven hundred acting bishops.

Thus the quorums of authority and presidency in the Church were restored as the growth of the Church demanded. Each one in turn was appointed by especial revelation, until the organization was completed. Besides the important revelations on Church government already noted, two other revelations were given dealing particularly with the history and duties of priesthood.^m From these we

^kQuoted by Roberts in “*Outlines of Ecclesiastical History*,” p. 316.

^kDoc. and Cov. 68:14.

^lDoc. and Cov. 72:8.

^mDoc. and Cov. secs. 84, 107.

learn that twelve deacons constitute a quorum of deacons; twenty-four teachers a quorum of teachers; and forty-eight priests a quorum of priests; that the bishop, besides presiding in a general way over the district where he is appointed, presides particularly over the Lesser or Aaronic Priesthood. From these, also, we learn that ninety-six elders constitute a quorum of elders; seventy seventies, a quorum of seventies; and all the high-priests of a district the quorum of high-priests in that district. Thus, from the First Presidency to the deacon, the organization of the Priesthood is complete and perfect in its operation.

Besides this perfect organization of the Priesthood, there are other helpful divisions and organizations that have been called forth by the growth of the Church. The most we can do with them here, however, is merely to mention them in closing. First is the territorial division of the Church. For convenience in government, the Church is divided territorially into stakes, wards, branches, missions, and conferences. Kirtland was undoubtedly the first stake of Zion to be appointed in the history of the Church. Concerning Kirtland, the Lord said in 1832:

“For I have consecrated the land of Shinehah (Kirtland) in mine own due time for the benefit of the saints of the Most High, and for a stake of Zion.”ⁿ

ⁿDoc. and Cov. 82:13.

In the dedicatory prayer offered in the Kirtland Temple, 1836, the Prophet Joseph Smith said:

"We ask thee to appoint unto Zion other Stakes, besides this one which thou hast appointed, that the gathering of thy people may roll on in great power and majesty, that thy work may be cut short in righteousness."^o

Other stakes were appointed. Today, the Church numbers more than sixty stakes, each presided over by a presidency of three high priests, and a high council of twelve high priests, with several alternate high councilmen.

As the Church is divided into stakes, so the stakes are divided into wards, each presided over by a bishop and two counselors. And the world at large, not included in the boundaries of the organized stakes, is divided into missions, each presided over by a president. The missions in turn are divided into conferences, presided over by conference presidents, and the conferences are divided into branches, likewise presided over by branch presidents.

The Church grew rapidly to such dimensions, however, that it needed even more assistance than these organizations and divisions could render. There has grown up in the Church, therefore, a number of auxiliary associations. The Relief Society, an organization of women, was organized under the direction of the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1842. The Sunday School was organized under the patronage of Brigham Young in 1849. The Young Ladies' Mu-

^oDoc. and Cov. 109:59.

tual Improvement Association was organized as a retrenchment society, under the supervision of President Brigham Young in 1869. A similar organization of the young men was effected in 1875, though there had been such an organization in Nauvoo. The Primary Association for children was organized in 1878. The Religion Class was organized in 1890. All these auxiliary organizations serve to lighten the labors of the priesthood, and of the home, in instructing the children of the saints.

Gradually, then, another act in the great drama of the Restoration was accomplished—an act of many scenes. But the achievements of the act have aroused, and continue to arouse, the wonder and the admiration of the civilized world. In the Church organization every point is carefully wrought out, from the highest and most important office to the lowest and least. Indeed, the perfection of the institution precludes the thought that it was devised by man alone. Not another so nearly perfect organization is to be found in the history of the world.

XII.

THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

Less than a month after the organization of the Church in 1830, there happened at Colesville, New York, one of the most remarkable manifestations in the history of the modern world. Joseph Smith had gone to Colesville to visit at the home of Joseph Knight. The Knights were Universalists. They were interested, however, in the message of the young prophet. One of them, particularly—a son named Newel Knight—seemed to be much affected by the Prophet's teachings. Says the Prophet in his simple narrative :

“He and I had many serious conversations on the important subject of man's eternal salvation. We got into the habit of praying much at our meetings, and Newel had said that he would try and take up his cross, and pray vocally during meeting ; but when we again met together, he rather excused himself. I tried to prevail upon him. * * * He replied that * * * he would wait until he could get into the woods by himself, and there he would pray. Accordingly, he deferred praying until next morning, when he retired into the woods ; where, according to his own account afterwards, he made several attempts to pray, but could scarcely do so, feeling that he had not done his duty, in refusing to pray in

the presence of others. He began to feel uneasy, and continued to feel worse both in mind and body, until, upon reaching his own house, his appearance was such as to alarm his wife very much. He requested her to go and bring me to him. I went, and found him suffering very much in his mind, and his body acted upon in a very strange manner; his visage and limbs distorted and twisted in every shape and appearance possible to imagine; and finally he was caught up off the floor of the apartment, and tossed about most fearfully.

"His situation was soon made known to his neighbors and relatives, and in a short time as many as eight or nine grown persons had got together to witness the scene. After he had thus suffered for a time, I succeeded in getting hold of him by the hand, when almost immediately he spoke to me, and with great earnestness requested me to cast the devil out of him, saying that he knew he was in him, and that he also knew I could cast him out.

"I replied, 'If you know that I can, it shall be done;' and then almost unconsciously I rebuked the devil, and commanded him in the name of Jesus Christ to depart from him; when immediately Newel spoke out and said that he saw the devil leave him and vanish from his sight. This was the first miracle which was done in the Church, or by any member of it, and it was done not by man, nor by the power of man, but it was done by God, and by the power of godliness; therefore, let the honor and the praise, the dominion and the glory, be ascribed to

the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.”^a

Concerning the truth of this ungarnished account there can be no doubt. It has appeared in print for many years, and has never been called in question. Moreover, the miracle was witnessed by several adult persons, and was strongly attested by Newel Knight himself. Without question, then, with the very beginning of the Church, the gifts of healing, so common with Jesus and His disciples, were restored to those holding the Holy Priesthood.

Not more than a year and a half after the performance of this remarkable miracle, there was performed another which the Prophet passed over in his narrative with scarcely a notice. He says, “About this time” (September 12, 1831), “Ezra Booth came out as an apostate. He came into the Church upon seeing a person healed of an infirmity of many years’ standing.”^b That is all. Fortunately, however, there is preserved for us an account of this case of healing; and it is the more valuable because it is written by a Campbellite historian, who did not accept the message of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The historian says:

“Ezra Booth, of Mantua, a Methodist preacher of much more than ordinary culture, and with strong natural abilities, in company with his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, and some other citizens of this place [Hiram, Ohio] visited Smith at his home in Kirt-

^a“History of the Church,” Vol. I, pp. 82, 83.

^b“History of the Church,” Vol. I, p. 215.

land, in 1831. Mrs. Johnson had been afflicted for some time with a lame arm, and was not at the time of the visit able to life her hand to her head. The party visited Smith partly out of curiosity, and partly to see for themselves what there might be in the new doctrine. During the interview the conversation turned on the subject of supernatural gifts, such as were conferred in the days of the apostles. Some one said, 'Here is Mrs. Johnson with a lame arm; has God given any power to men now on earth to cure her?' A few moments later, when the conversation had turned in another direction, Smith rose, and walking across the room, taking Mrs. Johnson by the hand, said in the most solemn and impressive manner: 'Woman, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I command thee to be whole,' and immediately left the room. The company were awe-stricken at the infinite presumption of the man, and the calm assurance with which he spoke. The sudden mental and moral shock—I know not how better to explain the well-attested fact—electrified the rheumatic arm—Mrs. Johnson at once lifted it up with ease, and on her return home the next day she was able to do her washing without difficulty or pain."^c

We can easily believe that the company was amazed at the manifestation of such power. It was not the will of God, however, that the great Prophet alone should possess the gift to heal the sick. On

^cHayden's "History of the Disciples," pp. 250, 251; quoted in "History of the Church," Vol. I, pp. 215, 216, footnote.

the contrary, it was bestowed through faith upon many others. From the first the elders had practiced the order of anointing the sick and praying for them. But in 1832, a little more than two years after the organization of the Church, the Lord gave a revelation in which He declared to the elders that certain signs should follow the operation of faith. The words of the Lord are these :

“As I said unto mine apostles I say unto you again that every soul who believeth on your words, and is baptized by water for the remission of sins, shall receive the Holy Ghost; and these signs shall follow them that believe :

“In my name they shall do many wonderful works :

“In my name they shall cast out devils ;

“In my name they shall heal the sick ;

“In my name they shall open the eyes of the blind, and unstop the ears of the deaf ;

“And the tongue of the dumb shall speak ;

“And if any man shall administer poison unto them it shall not hurt them ;

“And the poison of a serpent shall not have power to hurt them.”^d

Thus wonderfully did the Lord repeat the promise made to the apostles of old ;^e and the promise has been fulfilled in an equally wonderful manner. The number of miraculous healings since 1832 is far too large to bear detailing here. But from that day to

^dDoc. and Cov. 84:63-72.

^eSee Mark 16:16-18.

the present, there have been wonderful healings, wherever the Church has been established. And hundreds of thousands testify that the gift of healing is indeed operative among the Latter-day Saints.

The gift of healing is not the only divine gift, however, that has been restored in latter days: "About the 8th of November," writes Joseph Smith, "I received a visit from Elders Joseph Young, Brigham Young, and Heber C. Kimball of Mendon, Monroe county, New York. They spent four or five days in Kirtland, during which we had many interesting moments. At one of our interviews, Brother Brigham Young and John P. Greene spoke in tongues, which was the first time I had heard this gift among the brethren: others also spoke, and I received the gift myself."^f

So briefly does the Prophet mention the reappearance of the strange gift of tongues. Fortunately, however, we have again another and fuller account. Writing of the same incident, President Brigham Young says, "A few weeks after my baptism I was at Brother Kimball's house one morning, and while family prayer was being offered up, Brother Alpheus Gifford commenced speaking in tongues. Soon the Spirit came on me, and I spoke in tongues, and we thought only of the day of Pentecost, when the apostles were clothed upon with cloven tongues of fire.

"In September, 1832, Brother Heber C. Kimball took his horse and wagon, Brother Joseph Young

^f"History of the Church," Vol. I, pp. 296, 297.

and myself accompanying him, and started for Kirtland to see the Prophet Joseph. We visited many friends on the way, and some branches of the Church. We exhorted them and prayed with them, and I spoke in tongues. Some pronounced it genuine and from the Lord, and others pronounced it from the devil.

"We proceeded to Kirtland and stopped at John P. Greene's, who had just arrived there with his family. We rested a few minutes, took some refreshment, and started to see the prophet. * * *

"In the evening a few of the brethren came in, and we conversed together upon the things of the kingdom. He called upon me to pray; in my prayer I spoke in tongues. As soon as we arose from our knees the brethren flocked around him, and asked his opinion concerning the gift of tongues that was upon me. He told them that it was the pure Adamic language. Some said to him they expected he would condemn the gift Brother Brigham had, but he said, 'No, it is of God.'"^g

Since the incident here related, many hundreds of the Saints of God have been blessed with this divine gift. Some are given to speak in tongues and others to interpret. The miracle comes to those who have faith, to strengthen their faith. Again, however, the number of these miraculous manifestations is far too large to be considered here. Hundreds of thousands bear witness to the restoration of the marvelous gift.

^g"Millennial Star," Vol. 25, p. 439; also quoted in part in "History of the Church," vol. I, p. 297, footnote.

And it is the fact of restoration about which we are most concerned.

Besides the gift of performing miracles and of healing, and the gift of speaking in tongues and of interpreting tongues, there are yet other divine gifts restored in this dispensation. To Joseph Smith was given very early the gift of prophecy. In the book of Doctrine and Covenants may be found many remarkable predictions made by him. All these predictions have been literally fulfilled, in so far as the time has come for their fulfillment; and the fulfillment happened in many cases long after the martyrdom of the great Prophet. Not only Joseph Smith, however, but many others in the Church have been blessed with the same gift of prophecy. All the presidents of the Church have displayed the divine gift. Many men in exalted position, and many men of low degree, have likewise manifested the prophetic inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The gift of prophecy is common among the restored gifts of the Church. So also is the gift of discernment, and the gift of wisdom, and the gift of knowledge, and the gift of faith. Indeed, through the ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith have been restored to man all the spiritual gifts known to the saints of old. To the great modern Church of Christ have been given the things enumerated by the Apostle Paul.

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant,” wrote Paul to the Corinthians. “Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; to another faith, by the same Spirit; to another the gift of healing, by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”^h

^hI Cor. 12:1-11.

XIII.

SACRED WRITINGS OF OLD.

The Inspired Version.

In December, 1830, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation in which was contained an important promise pertaining to the sacred records of the Church. The Church had been in existence little more than six months. During those months it had grown phenomenally in numbers. And during those months, too, many discussions had been inevitably provoked concerning the infallibility of the scriptures. The Prophet who lived and moved among them, the saints accepted as the living oracle of God; and when they thirsted for the Water of Life, he was abundantly able to give it them. But the sacred writings of the Jews—the Bible—had not the power so to satisfy them as had the quick word of the Prophet. Some of the words of the ancients were not clear. It seemed that there were mistranslations, omissions, and even interpolations in the Holy Book. Moreover, some valuable scriptures seemed to have been lost. They appeared in the Book in name only; their invaluable contents were unknown. In view of these conditions, it is not surprising that the young Church should desire to know how much of the Sacred Word of God, as it had been preserved to them, might be accepted with authority. And what they longed to

know was divinely given to them. In a revelation received by the young Prophet in December, 1830, the Lord said to Sidney Rigdon, "A commandment I give unto thee, that thou shalt write for him [i. e., Joseph Smith]; and the Scriptures shall be given, even as they are in mine own bosom, to the salvation of mine own elect."^a

This promise, with commandment, evidently signifies that the Lord purposed to make clear dark sayings of Scripture, which some of the saints were questioning. In support of this fact may be cited another revelation, given only two months later, in which the Lord renews the promise. "Thou shalt ask," He said to the Prophet Joseph, "and my scriptures shall be given as I have appointed, and they shall be preserved in safety."^b

Already, however, six months or so before the promise was made in revelation, the Lord had prepared for its fulfillment. In June, 1830, only two months after the organization of the Church, the Prophet had received the revelation known as the "Words of Moses."^c It is a kind of introduction to the book of Genesis; it tells how Moses came to know the story of the creation, and the relation of man to God. No finer introductory chapter to the book of beginnings could possibly be conceived. Again, in the same month in which the revelation with promise was given, the Lord revealed certain "doings of

^aDoc. and Cov. 35:20.

^bDoc. and Cov. 42:56.

^cPearl of Great Price.

olden times, from the prophecy of Enoch."^d "Much conjecture and conversation frequently occurred among the Saints," writes the Prophet, "concerning the books mentioned, and referred to, in various places in the Old and New Testaments, which were now nowhere to be found. The common remark was, 'They are lost books;' but it seems the Apostolic Church had some of these writings, as Jude mentions or quotes the prophecy of Enoch, the seventh from Adam."^e To the joy of the congregation, extracts from this prophecy of Enoch were revealed to the Prophet Joseph, and added to the growing treasure-house of scripture. Already, too, the Prophet had begun to make a revision of the Bible. Before the close of the year 1830, this revision was well under way.

Before the close of the year, however, the Prophet was commanded to desist from further translating until he should go to Ohio.^f Again, in December, 1831, the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon were commanded to go upon a mission preaching the gospel.^g Of necessity, the work of "revision" must rest while the Seer and the scribe were about these other duties. Except for such interruptions as these, however, the "revision" of the Bible made fair progress. And in addition to the textual "translation," there were received by the Prophet other revelations bear-

^d"History of the Church," Vol. I, p. 133.

^e"History of the Church," Vol. I, p. 132.

^fDoc. and Cov. 37:1.

^gDoc. and Cov. 71:1-11.

ing upon the Holy Word. Thus, in January, 1832, there was received an explanation of I Cor. 7:14.^h In February, of the same year, there came to the translators, while they were engaged with the Gospel of St. John, a wonderful vision of the glories hereafter.ⁱ The following March, the Prophet received explanations of some parts of the revelation to St. John.^j One year later, there came a revelation on the authenticity of the Apocrypha.^k Thus, by the spirit of inspiration and revelation, the sacred records of old were made plain. The mistakes of men were corrected; and important words that had been lost, were supplied. The first "revision" of the New Testament was finished February 2, 1833, and that of the Old Testament, July 2 of the same year.

The inspired revision of the Hebrew Scriptures was not published during the lifetime of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He intended to continue the work of revision, by going over the entire work again, before it should be given to the world. In the year 1840, he expressed a desire to shift much of the arduous responsibility resting upon him to the shoulders of the Twelve and other officers, that he might resume the work of translation and revision. In a memorial presented June 18, 1840, the Prophet wrote, "The Church have erected an office where he [Joseph Smith, the memorialist] can attend to the affairs of the Church without distraction, he thinks,

^hDoc. and Cov. sec. 74.

ⁱDoc. and Cov. sec. 76.

^jDoc. and Cov. sec. 77.

^kDoc. and Cov. sec. 91.

and verily believes, that the time has now come, when he should devote himself exclusively to those things which relate to the spiritualities of the Church, and commence the work of translating the Egyptian records, the Bible, and wait upon the Lord for such revelations as may be suited to the conditions and circumstances of the Church."¹ Up to the time of his martyrdom, however, the Prophet found no time in which fully to carry out his design. Therefore, the inspired version of the Holy Scriptures, a manuscript copy of which is preserved in the Historian's Office at Salt Lake City, has never been given to the world by proper authority. A volume purporting to be the inspired version has appeared on the public market; but it is not recognized by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, because it has never received the careful revision intended by the Prophet. The authorized version of King James remains the standard Bible of the Church.

The Book of Abraham.

In July, 1835, there came into the hands of the Prophet, Joseph Smith, other invaluable records of the times of the patriarchs. It appears that in the year 1828, a French explorer named Antonio Sebolo, secured permission from Mehemet Ali, the viceroy of Egypt, to explore for antiquities. Three years later, in 1831, Sebolo entered some catacombs near the place where stood formerly the ancient city of

¹"History of the Church," Vol. IV, p. 137.

Thebes. Eleven of the mummies, found in a perfect state of preservation, he carried away with him to Paris. On the way to the French capital, however, M. Sebolo put in at Trieste, where he died after an illness of several days. The mummies were then directed to a nephew named Chandler. Mr. Chandler lived in Philadelphia, Pa., though it was supposed that his home was in Ireland. After a devious course, the mummies came finally to New York, addressed to Michael H. Chandler. There the caskets were first opened, and the contents examined. "On opening the coffins," the Prophet tells us, "he (Mr. Chandler) discovered that in connection with two of the bodies, was something rolled up with the same kind of linen, saturated with the same bitumen, which when examined, proved to be two rolls of papyrus." These rolls of papyrus were beautifully written "with black, and a small part red, ink or paint, in perfect preservation."^m

A stranger standing near at the time of the discovery recommended to Mr. Chandler that he seek out the Mormon Prophet, Joseph Smith, as probably the only man who could render a correct translation of the ancient manuscripts. Mr. Chandler, however, began to exhibit the mummies in the larger cities of the United States. They very soon became objects of peculiar interest. Mr. Chandler was assured by the learned men of the land that both mummies and papyrus were genuine. Indeed, from some he received certificates testifying to the genuineness

^m"History of the Church, " Vol. II, pp. 348-350.

of his display and to the characters of the papyrus. It was not until July 3, 1835, that Mr. Chandler reached Kirtland with the Egyptian mummies. Immediately, it appears, he sought out the Prophet Joseph Smith. "There were four human figures," the latter writes in his history, "together with hieroglyphic figures and devices. As Mr. Chandler had been told I could translate them, he brought me some of the characters, and I gave him the interpretation, and like a gentleman, he gave me the following certificate:

" 'Kirtland, July 6, 1835.

" 'This is to make known to all who may be desirous, concerning the knowledge of Mr. Joseph Smith, Jun., in deciphering the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic characters in my possession, which I have, in many eminent cities, showed to the most learned; and, from the information that I could ever learn, or meet with, I find that of Mr. Joseph Smith, Jun., to correspond in the most minute matters.

" 'MICHAEL H. CHANDLER,
" 'Traveling with, and proprietor
of Egyptian mummies.' "

Soon after receiving this certificate from Mr. Chandler some of the Saints in Kirtland purchased from him the mummies and the papyrus. Thereupon, the Prophet, with William W. Phelps and Oliver Cowdery as scribes, began to translate the

"History of the Church," Vol. II, p. 235.

strange hieroglyphics. To their infinite joy, they found that one of the rolls contained writings of Abraham, whereas the other contained writings of Joseph, who was sold into Egypt. The first of these the Prophet translated, in part. It recounts the trials of Abraham in the idolatrous home of his fathers, and his miraculous deliverance. It tells also of the creation of the world, and of the spirits before, and reveals the system of astronomy understood by the ancient patriarch. The Book of Abraham, an invaluable and truly authentic record translated by divine inspiration, forms now an important part of the Pearl of Great Price.

It appears that the papyrus-roll containing the writings of Joseph was never translated. The Saints retained possession of the mummies, and carried them along in their wanderings, until they became settled in their new home—Nauvoo, the Beautiful. There, the mummies were displayed in the Nauvoo Mansion, built by the Prophet. After the death of the Prophet, however, the mummies and the papyrus-rolls fell into the hands of the Prophet's family, and were sold. For some time they were exhibited by a syndicate in St. Louis. Thence, they were sold to a museum in Chicago. When the great fire swept Chicago in 1870, the museum was destroyed; and with it, presumably, the historic mummies and the sacred records of old. All that we have preserved to us, then, of these interesting papyrus records is contained in the Pearl of Great Price.

Thus the knowledge of the Saints was extended,

the hand-dealings of God with His ancient people were made known, and many sacred writings were added to the scripture already possessed by the Church. The King James version of the Bible was already accepted "as far as it was translated correctly." The Book of Moses deals with the beginnings—with the fundamentals. It reveals how man came first to know of God, of His Son, Jesus Christ, and of the divine plan of salvation. It supplies the living truth of man's relationship to God, which the Authorized Version—through the interference of the opinions of men—states but obscurely. It looks hopefully forward to the future, when the King of glory shall come in. Without that portion of inspired scripture contained in the Book of Moses, we should lack much in our knowledge of the history of God and of man.

In like manner, the Book of Abraham supplies valuable information concerning the wonderful works of God. Independent of the Book of Moses, it corroborates all that is taught there. And it goes further. From it we learn important truths concerning a pre-existent state; and from it we learn more fully, too, of the worlds, and the creation of worlds. The science of creation is perhaps nowhere else so fully explained as in the Book of Abraham. There, too, are outlined some of the important principles of the New Astronomy, principles fast coming to be recognized as true by scientific men. Without this record we should lack much in our knowledge of the history of God and of man.

Another act, then, in the great drama of the Restoration has been accomplished. To knowledge has been added knowledge. To the sacred record contained in the Bible was added that of the Book of Mormon. And now, to both of these, are added two others, briefer than either of the first, but wanting nothing in significance to the people of God.

XIV.

A SACRED BOOK OF TODAY.

When the Lord God called Miriam and Aaron to task for speaking against their brother Moses, He said to them, "Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold; wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"^a

So it was also with the Prophet Joseph Smith. From the day of the first splendid vision of the Father and the Son, the Lord spoke often to the young prophet, and clearly. Particularly close was the communion of the Prophet with his God after the re-establishment of the Church upon the earth. As often as he felt the need of direction or encouragement, so often did the young man seek God; and God always answered him, and spoke to him, and gave him what was needful for him in that hour. It happened, then, that in a very short time the Prophet had accumulated a fairly large number of revelations. For each time the Lord spoke to him, either he him-

^aNúm. 12:1-8.

self or one of his scribes recorded the revelation as it was given. Afterwards, copies were made and circulated among the Saints that were most nearly concerned.

If we had lived with the Saints in Kirtland, in the year 1832, we should have been thrilled with them when the Prophet received the momentous revelation now numbered eighty-eight in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. This remarkable and important revelation was circulated among the Saints in manuscript form. It came to be called the "Olive Leaf." And the "Olive Leaf" is an example of how the revelations were first circulated among the Saints. Of course, the method was very unsatisfactory in a day of modern advancement. The people began soon to desire the word of God, as given to them directly, in printed form. Indeed, so early did this desire manifest itself that in July, 1830, only three months after the organization of the Church, the Prophet Joseph Smith was already engaged on the compilation of the revelations.^b This was the beginning of the book of modern scripture.

The work of compilation seems, however, to have progressed slowly. Somewhat over a year after the task was begun, a special conference was convened in Hiram, Ohio. This was November 1st, 1831.^c The conference was called to consider the publication of the revelations received by the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was decided to issue an edition of 10,000

^b"History of the Church," Vol. I, p. 104.

^c"History of the Church," Vol. I, p. 221.

copies; and during the afternoon of the first day of the conference, the Prophet "received by inspiration," the preface to the proposed book. It appears now as section first in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. It is a model of literary construction. The same afternoon, too, the brethren assembled bore testimony to the divine inspiration of the revelations. "Brother Joseph Smith, Jun.," we read, "said that inasmuch as the Lord had bestowed a great blessing upon us in giving commandments and revelations, he asked the conference what testimony they were willing to attach to these commandments which would shortly be sent to the world. A number of the brethren arose and said that they were willing to testify to the world that they knew that they were of the Lord."^d

On the second day of the conference, "the revelation (of the evening before) was read by the moderator (this was Oliver Cowdery). The brethren then arose in turn and bore witness to the truth of the Book of Commandments." The elders present at this special conference were Joseph Smith, Jun., Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, John Whitmer, Peter Whitmer, Jun., Sidney Rigdon, William E. McLellin, Orson Hyde, Luke Johnson and Lyman E. Johnson.

With the confidence and the testimonies of the elders thus expressed, Joseph Smith proceeded further to prepare the revelations for publication. It was decided by the conference that Oliver Cowdery

^d"History of the Church," Vol. I, p. 222, footnote.

should carry the commandments and revelations to Independence, Mo., where the printing press of the Church was located. The Prophet should prepare and arrange the revelations by the time Elder Cowdery left—"which was to be by—or, if possible, before—the 15th of the month" (November).^e In due time, the work of compilation was accomplished; the volume of modern scripture was dedicated by prayer to the service of the Almighty, the Prophet himself performing the ordinance;^f John Whitmer was appointed to accompany Oliver Cowdery through the wild frontier to Independence; and the sacred record was sent on its way to Zion.

The printing of the sacred book did not progress rapidly. On the twenty-fifth of June, 1833, more than a year after the holding of the special conference, Sidney Rigdon wrote a long letter, in behalf of the Presidency of the Church, to W. W. Phelps and others in Zion. "We have received your last," he writes, "containing a number of questions which you desire us to answer. * * *

"First as respects getting the Book of Commandments bound we think it is not necessary. They will be sold well without binding, and there is no book-binder to be had that we know of, nor are there materials to be had for biding, without keeping the books too long from circulation."

Later in the same letter, the writer says, "We have received some revelations within a short time back,

^e"History of the Church," Vol. I, p. 290.

^f"History of the Church," Vol. I, p. 234.

which you will obtain in due season." And a little later, still, in the same letter, the writer calls attention to some typographical errors in the fortieth and forty-fourth chapters of the forthcoming book.^g Evidently, then, the work of printing the sacred book had progressed so far that preparations had to be made for binding the book; yet, there was still time apparently to add new revelations and to make corrections.

A little less than a month after writing the letter mentioned above, Sidney Rigdon wrote another in behalf of the Presidency. In the latter letter he writes, "Consign the box of the Book of Commandments to N. K. Whitney & Co., Kirtland, Geauga County, Ohio, care of Kelly and Walworth, Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Ohio."^h Evidently, the first edition of the Book of Commandments was nearing completion. The Sacred Book of today was soon to be sent out into the world.

Unfortunately, however, the shipment was never made. On July 20th, 1833, a mob collected near the Church printing office in Independence, and demanded that the printing office and the store be closed, and that all mechanical labors cease.ⁱ The Church leaders in Zion refused to comply with these unreasonable demands. Thereupon, the mob rushed upon the building, destroyed papers and publications, seized materials of value, turned the family of Wm.

^g"History of the Church," Vol. I, pp. 362-364.

^h"History of the Church," Vol. I, p. 369.

ⁱ"History of the Church," Vol. I, p. 390.

W. Phelps out of doors, and razed the building to the ground. Only a few copies of that edition of the Book of Commandments as far as printed were saved from destruction.^j

Somewhat over a year later, the Church prepared again to publish the revelations. A printing house had been established in Kirtland, Ohio. The conditions seemed favorable for the putting forth of the Book of Commandments. On September 24, 1834, at a meeting of the High Council, at Kirtland, a committee was appointed "to arrange the items of the doctrine of Jesus Christ, for the government of the Church of Latter-day Saints, which Church was organized and commenced its rise on the 6th of April, 1830. These items are to be taken from the Bible, Book of Mormon, and the revelations which have been given to the Church up to this date, or that shall be given until such arrangements are made." President Joseph Smith, Jun., Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams were appointed the committee.^k

This committee, it seems, worked with energy at the task of compiling and printing. On August 17, 1835, a little less than a year after their appointment, the committee finished their appointed labor, and a general assembly of the priesthood was called to accept the volume of sacred scripture. In the afternoon session of the assembly Oliver Cowdery introduced

^j"History of the Church," Vol. I, pp. 411, 412.

^k"History of the Church," Vol. II, p. 165.

to the priesthood the "Book of Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter-day Saints." William W. Phelps and John Whitmer voluntarily testified to the divine authenticity of the new volume of Scripture. Thereafter, the presidents of the High Councils of Kirtland and Missouri, and the presidents of the several quorums of the priesthood bore testimony that the revelations in the book were true and that the book should become "a law and a rule of faith and a practice to the Church." Finally, the general authorities and the whole assembly accepted the book by unanimous vote as the doctrine and covenants of their faith. William W. Phelps read also the following testimony of the twelve apostles to the truth of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants:

"The testimony of the Witnesses to the Book of the Lord's commandments, which commandments He gave to His Church through Joseph Smith, Jun., who was appointed, by the voice of the Church, for this purpose.

"We therefore feel willing to bear testimony to all the world of mankind, to every creature upon the face of all the earth, that the Lord has borne record to our souls, through the Holy Ghost shed forth upon us, that these commandments were given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for all men, and are verily true. We give this testimony unto the world, the Lord being our helper; and it is through the grace of God the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ, that we are permitted to have this privilege of bearing this testimony unto the world, in the which we rejoice exceedingly, praying the Lord

always that the children of men may be profited thereby.^l (Signed)

“THOMAS B. MARSH,
“DAVID W. PATTEN,
“BRIGHAM YOUNG,
“HEBER C. KIMBALL,
“ORSON HYDE,
“WM. E. MCLELLIN,
“PARLEY P. PRATT,
“LUKE S. JOHNSON,
“WILLIAM SMITH,
“ORSON PRATT,
“JOHN F. BOYNTON,
“LYMAN E. JOHNSON.”^m

Thus was the “Book of Doctrine and Covenants” accepted by the Church as a divinely inspired work. And what is the “Book of Doctrine and Covenants”? First, there appears in the book a series of seven “Lectures on Faith,” prepared during the year 1835. “They are not to be regarded,” we are told, “as of equal authority in matters of doctrine with the revelations of God in the Doctrine and Covenants,” but as judiciously written and compiled, and as profit-

^l“History of the Church,” Vol. II, pp. 243-245.

^mIn this testimony of the Twelve to the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, as published in the History of Joseph Smith in the “Millennial Star,” the names of the Apostles were not appended, but it is thought proper that they should be inserted here in the order in which they stood in the quorum. The document was undoubtedly prepared before the departure of the Twelve for the East, as it was well known that the work of the committee on selection and compilation would present the Doctrine and Covenants to a general assembly before the Twelve would return.—“History of the Church,” Vol. II, p. 245, footnote.

able doctrine." There follow one hundred thirty-six sections, or chapters, of the book proper. One of these, section 136, is a revelation to Brigham Young. Nine others, sections 102, 121, 123, 127, 128, 130, 131, 134, and 135—are not direct revelations in the usually accepted sense, but are minutes of important meetings, prayers and prophecies, addresses to the Saints, letters, instructions, and so forth, containing important doctrines. The rest—one hundred twenty-six sections in all—are revelations from the Lord through the Prophet Joseph Smith to the Church, or to individuals in the Church. In these one hundred thirty-six sections may be found instructions that pertain to the organization of the Church and to the doctrines of the Church. While there have been many revelations received since the first Book of Doctrine and Covenants was published—while, indeed, the Church leaders today are prophets, seers, and revelators—yet the early revelations are so replete with doctrinal instruction, that we may find there sufficient directions for the establishment and the building up of the Church of Christ.

The Doctrine and Covenants meets conditions, not of two thousand years or more before Christ, but of the present day. It gives specific directions for the establishing and the maintaining of the Church of Christ, not among an oriental people in a primitive age, but among an active people in a progressive age. The living oracle of God is of far

"*History of the Church*," Vol. II, p. 176, footnote.

more value than the breathless letter. The living prophet is the oracle of God; and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants—the Sacred Book of today—is the record of the revelations received today for the people of today.

XV.

THE KEYS OF GATHERING.

Sunday, the 3rd of April, 1836, was a momentous day in the history of the Church. Since the day of its organization, the Church had increased and had prospered in all things. The first conference of the Church was held June 9th, 1830. It is estimated that the membership then was twenty-seven. On the twenty-sixth of September of the same year, the second conference of the Church was held. There were then sixty-two devotees of the restored Gospel. In January of the following year, 1831, the Prophet moved to Kirtland, Ohio. His followers then could not have numbered more than eighty, since he wrote in the previous month that the Church "from Colesville to Canandagua, New York, numbered about seventy members." In Kirtland the restored faith soon took root and grew rapidly. A conference was held there from the third to the sixth of June, 1831, and the "congregation at this conference numbered two thousand souls." Thus the Church increased in membership from year to year until it soon numbered ten thousand and more. But it was not in increased membership only that the Church showed prosperity. In temporal matters the blessings of the Lord soon became abundantly manifest. The Saints acquired lands, and built houses; and they began to

take possession of the promised land of Zion. In spiritual matters, too, the Saints were made to feel that the Lord was near at hand. Many revelations were given to them through the Prophet Joseph Smith. And in the year 1836, a Temple was completed in Kirtland. It was eighty feet long, sixty feet wide, fifty feet high to the top of the walls, with a tower one hundred ten feet high. On Sunday, March twenty-seventh, this temple was dedicated to the Lord; and one week later, Sunday, April 3rd, there were given to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery some of the most glorious manifestations recorded in the annals of history.

The day had been devoted to service in the Lord's House. Joseph Smith had taken part in the ceremonies of the day, and had listened to discourses delivered by the brethren. After the administration of the Lord's supper in the afternoon service, "I retired to the pulpit," writes the Prophet, "the veils being dropped, and bowed myself, with Oliver Cowdery, in solemn and silent prayer."^a After rising from prayer, the visions of heaven burst open before these divinely appointed men. First appeared to them the Lord Jesus Himself. He stood upon the breast-work of the pulpit. Under His feet appeared a paved work of pure gold in color like amber. His eyes shone like a flame of fire. His hair was white, like pure snow. His countenance was more radiant than the sun. His voice was like the rushing of great waters.

^a"History of the Church," Vol. II, p. 435.

"I am the first and the last," he said, "I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain, I am your advocate with the Father. * * * Behold, I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here, and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house. * * * Yea, the hearts of thousands and tens of thousands shall greatly rejoice in consequence of the blessings which shall be poured out, and the endowment with which my servants have been endowed in this house; and the fame of this house shall spread to foreign lands, and this is the beginning of the blessing which shall be poured out upon the heads of my people. Even so. Amen."^b

In this wise did the Lord Jesus accept the work of His servants. In this wise did He appear personally before them. And in this wise did He inaugurate marvelous manifestations fraught with blessings to the Saints. Twice before in this dispensation it is recorded that the Lord manifested Himself in vision to His chosen Prophet. Once He had appeared together with the Father in answer to the boy's earnest prayer. Again He had appeared to the Prophet and his associate, Sidney Rigdon, to declare the glories of the world to come. And now He comes again, to approve the labor accomplished by His servants, and to inaugurate the actual work of redemption for both the living and the dead.

Immediately after the vision of the Savior there opened to the seer another vision of heaven. Ages before, the Lord God had selected the children of

^bDoc. and Cov. 110:1-10.

Israel to become His chosen people. The divine plan of salvation for the human race anticipated a fall from grace and an atonement. Through the fall came death to all men; and through the atonement came eternal life. As the fall came through the sin of one, so the atonement came through the voluntary sacrifice of another. But that this Savior might become the living hope of the world, it became necessary to designate the people—even the family—from among whom He should spring. Hence the Chosen people—Israel—to whom the promise of Messiah was made. All might have been well with Israel had they not been a stiff-necked people. But through their perverseness of heart, they called down upon them the wrath of God. Along with promises of deliverance and salvation, came predictions of evil to follow disobedience. And Israel was disobedient. Finally, when the Savior had come as predicted to redeem the world, and the iniquity of Israel was full, the Chosen People was broken; the nation to whom the Savior had come became scattered, and was sifted like dust among the peoples of the earth. It was the punishment foretold. To consummate the plan of salvation, must come a gathering of the dispersed tribes of Israel.

Accordingly, the vision that followed upon that of the Savior on the memorable 3rd of April, 1836, revealed to Joseph and Oliver, Moses, the Prophet of the deliverance of old. "After this vision was closed," we read, "the heavens were again opened unto us, and Moses appeared before us, and com-

mitted unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north.”^c

The nature of this commission is plain. First, the great Prophet Moses, to whom had been committed the authority of restoring once before a captive Israel to their promised land and freedom, now commits those keys of gathering and restoration to the Prophet Joseph Smith and his associate Oliver Cowdery. Then, with the power of this authority conferred upon them, Joseph and Oliver may commission others; the story of the restoration of the Gospel may be carried to the scattered house of Jacob; the actual work of redeeming Israel may be begun. This, as the Lord had said in the vision before, was the beginning of the blessing which should be poured out upon the heads of His people.

But it was not the house of Israel alone that should profit by the restoration of the Gospel. Even before the twelve sons of Jacob had been chosen to become the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel, the God of heaven had promised that the blessing of a Savior should attend all the children of the world.

“I will make of thee a great nation,” the Lord had said to Abraham, “and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”^d Not only to the children

^cDoc. and Cov. 110:11.

^dGen, 12:2, 3.

of Abraham, then, should the Gospel be preached, but to all people, and through obedience to the Gospel they should become the children of Abraham. If the restored Gospel were, then, to become the power of God unto salvation to all the earth-children of God, there must needs be a restoration, not only of the authority to gather and to redeem Israel, but also of the authority to preach the Gospel to the world at large.

Accordingly, after the vision of Moses was closed, there appeared another glorious vision to the two young chosen prophets. "After this," we read, "Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the Gospel of Abraham, saying, that in us, and our seed, all generations after us should be blessed."^e

The nature of this commission, too, is plain. It becomes the sacred mission of the Saints to do all in their power, not to save Israel alone, but to become a blessing to all generations of all men—to cry the Gospel of repentance to the world, that all men, whether Jew or Gentile, may hear it and obey it. Elias—a prophet of whom we know but little^f—apparently held last the keys of the dispensation of the Gospel of Abraham. In proper time he comes, in harmony with the divine plan, and commits those keys to the men who are to carry off the labors of the dispensation of the fulness of times. This, again—as the Lord had said in the vision before—was the beginning of the blessing which should be poured

^eDoc. and Cov. 110:12.

^fDoc. and Cov. 27:6, 7.

out upon the heads of His people. And thus was consummated another act in the great drama of the Restoration. The authority for accomplishing the salvation of the living was restored in full. The story of the restoration of the authority for the salvation of the dead we must leave for another chapter.

XVI.

THE FATHERS AND THE CHILDREN.

The glorious visions in which had appeared Moses and Elias were closed. Joseph and Oliver stood before the pulpit of the temple waiting. But why should they wait for further manifestations? What more could they now expect? Or, what more, indeed, could now be given them? All the living children of the world were provided for. Authority to preach and to baptize Joseph and Oliver had held before the appearance of Moses and Elias. But Israel was a special people. Upon Israel had been passed a special sentence. Moses was the great law-giver and deliver of ancient Israel. Therefore, that everything might be done in order, Moses came to restore the special authority of redeeming and gathering the chosen people. In like manner, Elias was he who held particularly the authority of the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham. Accordingly, in the last days, that everything might be done in order, the authority of the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham was restored by him who held it to the great American prophet, though he held already the full authority of the Priesthood of the Son of God. Thus, the redemption and the salvation, not of living Israel alone, but of all the living human family were provided for. What more could the Prophet and his companion await?

It is said in the Jewish Scripture that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.^a But the very fact that the keys of authority are restored to preach the gospel to the living presupposes a loss of that authority, and a departure from the true doctrine of the Christ. There have died many hundreds of thousands who have not confessed Jesus. Indeed, even at the present time, there die daily in the best Christian lands thousands of persons who have never heard the joyful sound of the Gospel of the Lord. Yet, only through obedience to the Gospel, may mortals be saved. The living may by good chance hear it; but what provision has been made for the dead?

During the visions of the night of September 21st, 1823, the Angel Moroni read to the Prophet Joseph these words of Malachi: "Behold I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers; if it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at its coming."^b

The words of the prophet predict undoubtedly a plan for the salvation of the dead. And that the unconverted dead shall have the opportunity of being saved becomes absolutely necessary to the accomplishment of the great scheme of redemption. The Gospel was not designed to save only a few. The

^aPhil. 2:11.

^bDoc. and Cov. sec. 2.

whole human family, both the living and the dead—and those yet to be, as well—may gain eternal life through obedience to the Gospel. The world hereafter will be a kingdom of glories, and a glory of kingdoms. Each one who has lived upon the earth will be awarded the degree of exaltation he merits. The children of the great Father of all will be assigned in His kingdom of glories to places they have earned; and each in his place will inherit, to the glory of the Father, a position equal to his earthly achievement. All this seems simple enough. But the kingdoms of the Father will include all His earth-children; and the more that have proved themselves worthy of exaltation and blessing, the greater will be His eternal joy. So also with each of the children, in turn. In the celestial glory each one's kingdom will comprise those of one's own family; and thus the glory of kingdoms will increase from generation to generation, each bound to the other—and all to the great Father—by the ties of kindred. The perfecting of the ties of kindred through a work done by the living for the dead, is undoubtedly what Paul had in mind when he said, speaking of the fathers of Israel, that "they without us should not be made perfect;"^c and again, "for to this end Christ both died, and rose and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."^d Hence, it becomes a matter of first importance to provide for the salvation of the dead. Hence, too, Joseph and Oliver

^cHeb. 11:49.^dRom. 14:9.

might well wait, after they had been commissioned with authority to save the living, to learn if the Lord had further keys of authority to confer upon them.

And the Lord had further authority to confer upon them. After the vision of Elias was closed, the promise given nearly thirteen years before was fulfilled. Another glorious vision opened before the seers. "For Elijah, the prophet," we read, "who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us and said: Behold the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi, testifying that he (Elijah) should be sent before the great and dreadful day of the Lord came, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse. Therefore the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands, and by this ye may know the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors."^e Thus, the necessary authority for performing saving ordinances for the dead was restored in this dispensation by him who held it. Another important act in the drama of the Restoration was accomplished.

During the years following immediately upon the vision of Elijah, not a great deal was accomplished in the great work of salvation for the dead. In after years, however, the subject grew on the Prophet's mind. It was ever present with him. He wrote about it, and he spoke about it. In 1841, in a general conference of the Church held at Nauvoo, he

^eDoc. and Cov. 110:13-16.

said, "There is never a time, when the spirit is too old to approach God. All are within reach of pardoning mercy, who have not committed the unpardonable sin, which hath no forgiveness, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. There is a way to release the spirits of the dead! that is by the power and authority of the Priesthood—by binding and loosing on earth. This doctrine appears glorious, inasmuch as it exhibits the greatness of divine compassion and benevolence in the extent of the plan of human salvation.

"This glorious truth is well calculated to enlarge the understanding and to sustain the soul under troubles, difficulties, and distresses. For illustration, suppose the case of two men, brothers, equally intelligent, learned, virtuous, and lovely, walking in uprightness and in all good conscience, so far as they have been able to discern from the muddy stream of tradition, or from the blotted page of the book of nature.

"One dies and is buried, having never heard the gospel of reconciliation; to the other the message of salvation is sent, he hears and embraces it, and is made the heir of eternal life. Shall the one become the partaker of glory and the other be consigned to hopeless perdition? Is there no chance for his escape? Sectarianism answers 'none.' Such an idea is worse than atheism. The truth shall break down and dash in pieces all such bigoted Pharisaism; the sects shall be sifted, the honest in heart brought out, and their priests left in the midst of the corruption.

"This doctrine presents in a clear light the wisdom and mercy of God in preparing an ordinance for the salvation of the dead, being baptized by proxy, their names recorded in heaven and they judged according to the deeds done in the body. This doctrine was the burden of the scriptures. Those Saints who neglect it in behalf of their deceased relatives, do it at the peril of their own salvation."^f

Again, in September of the year following, while he was in hiding from his enemies who pursued him without cause, the Prophet wrote two epistles to the Church.^g In these he confesses that the subject of salvation for the dead is uppermost in his mind. He gives detailed instructions for the proper recording of the vicarious work of those who have gone before. He shows by scriptural evidence why it is necessary to preserve an accurate record of all that is done upon the earth. He reviews with spirit the whole of the sublime doctrine of the salvation of the dead. And, finally, he bursts into a beautiful modern psalm^h praising the King Immanuel, who ordained before the world was a means whereby the uninitiated dead might be redeemed.

"It is sufficient to know," he says, discussing the prediction that Elijah should come, "that the earth will be smitten with a curse, unless there is a welding link of some kind or other, between the fathers and the children, upon some subject or other, and

^f"History of the Church," Vol. IV, pp. 425-6.

^gDoc. and Cov. secs. 127, 128.

^hDoc. and Cov. 128:22-24.

behold what is that subject? It is the baptism for the dead. For we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect. Neither can they or we, be made perfect without those who have died in the gospel also; for it is necessary in the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times; which dispensation is now beginning to usher in, that a whole and complete, and perfect union and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories should take place, and be revealed from the days of Adam even to the present time.”ⁱ

The restoration of the special authority to perform vicarious work for the dead occurred, it will be remembered, in the Kirtland Temple, April 3rd, 1836. In the Kirtland Temple there were no provisions made, however, for performing ordinances for the dead. It was not erected for that purpose. During the years, then, before suitable accommodations were provided in the Temple, the saving ordinance of baptism for the dead was performed, in compliance with instructions received by the Prophet, in the Mississippi river.

But in a revelation given January 19th, 1841, the Prophet Joseph was commanded to build the temple at Nauvoo.^j For this temple the Lord made known by revelation what was necessary for performing the great work of redeeming the dead. Moreover, the Lord declared that the ordinance of baptism for the

ⁱDoc. and Cov. 128:18.

^jDoc. and Cov. sec. 124.

dead belongs to His Holy House, and cannot be acceptable to Him when performed elsewhere, except during the days of poverty of the Church. An appointed time was named; "and if you do not these things at the end of the appointment, [i. e., perform the work for the dead], ye shall be rejected as a Church, with your dead, saith the Lord your God."^k The period of the appointment expired, it would seem, the same year; for at the conference held October 2nd, 1841, the Prophet announced, "There shall be no more baptism for the dead, until the ordinance can be attended to in the Lord's House; and the Church shall not hold another General Conference until they can meet in said house. *For thus saith the Lord.*"

Since that day, the great work of salvation of the dead has been performed in specially built temples, or houses of the Lord.

^kDoc. and Cov. 124:32.

^l"History of the Church," Vol. IV. p. 426.

XVII.

THE GOSPEL BROTHERHOOD.

There is a very interesting kind of community life mentioned in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. On Pentecost, after the resurrection of the Lord, Peter preached a powerful sermon to the Jews assembled in Jerusalem from all parts of the world. The hearts of the multitude were touched. "Men and brethren," they cried, "what shall we do?" Peter instructed them. There were added to the Church in that day about three thousand souls. "And all that believed were together," we read, "and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need."^a Again, not very long thereafter, Peter and John were imprisoned for preaching of Jesus in Jerusalem. Since, however, there was no charge against them on which they might be punished, the apostles were released. Then they returned to their own company and united with them in prayer. And this company of believers had all things common. "Neither was there any among them that lacked, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at

^aActs 2:41-45.

the apostles' feet, and distribution was made to every man according as he had need."^b

This custom of having all things common was by no means original with the Apostolic Church. Thousands of years before a similar principle had been observed in a select patriarchal community. Enoch, also, organized those who followed him into a kind of "united order." They had all things in common, and finally were translated as a community because of their righteousness.^c "Thus Enoch (the seventh from Adam) instituted an order of things among his people, in their business and financial relations, which so revolutionized their temporalities that they had no poor among them, and all rejoiced together in equal hope of the life and exaltation offered to them in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten of the Father."^d

This order of life did not persist, however, after apostolic times. It was wholly unknown to the Christian churches of the nineteenth century. Since, however, it was one of the governing principles of the Church of Christ, we should look to see it restored in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times.

The Prophet Joseph Smith received, as early as January second, 1831, some instructions concerning the united order of community life. This was only about nine months after the organization of the Church. "Wherefore," says the Lord in a revela-

^bActs 4:31-35.

^cPearl of Great Price.

^dCompendium, pp. 263, 264.

tion given then, "for this cause I gave unto you the commandment that ye should go to the Ohio; and there I will give unto you my law."^e By the "law" is meant undoubtedly the law of consecration, which is the basic principle of the United Order. Accordingly, only one month later, on February 9th, 1831, the Lord gave to Joseph Smith, at Kirtland, Ohio, another revelation, explaining this law of the Church. Twelve of the elders of the Church were present when this revelation was received. In it the members of the Church were instructed to consecrate of their properties for the support of the poor, and for the purchasing of lands, the building of temples and houses of worship, and the establishing of the New Jerusalem. The method of consecration is outlined in a general way.^f

After this, the prophet received several revelations on the subject of the United Order, or the Order of Enoch, explaining the principle more fully. He was instructed to organize the Saints "by a bond or everlasting covenant that cannot be broken," "for the benefit of the Church of the living God, that every man may improve upon his talent, that every man may gain other talents, yea, even an hundred fold, to be cast into the Lord's storehouse, to become the common property of the whole Church."^g He was given by revelation the rules governing the as-

^eDoc. and Cov. 38:32.

^fDoc. and Cov. 42:30-39; read the whole revelation.

^gDoc. and Cov. Secs. 78, 82.

signing of stewardships.^h Twice he received specific commandments and directions for organizing the principal communities of the Church into suitable orders for the care of the poor; for establishing equality among the rich and the poor; and for securing the independence of the Church upon the earth.ⁱ He was told what provision should be made for widows and orphans.^j He was directed to appoint clerks and treasurers, and have their duties specifically defined.^k He received special revelations on the subject for the enlightenment of certain persons.^l He was told what should be the punishment of those not enrolled in the book of remembrance.^m And in frequent inspired communications he received instructions that the commandments which had been given concerning Zion and her law should be executed and fulfilled.ⁿ

In a measure, some of the Saints of the early days of the Church endeavored to carry out the commandments concerning the United Order of community life. As soon as the principles of the order were thoroughly understood, some of the members of the Church were organized according to them, and each person belonging to the organization consecrated his property to the Order. The law of

^hDoc. and Cov. 51:1-20.

ⁱDoc. and Cov. Secs. 78, 82.

^jDoc. and Cov. 83:1-6.

^kDoc. and Cov. 85:1-5; 104:1-85.

^lDoc. and Cov. 92:1-2; 96:9.

^mDoc. and Cov. 85:9-12.

ⁿDoc. and Cov. 105:34.

consecration and stewardship requires that the person who wishes to comply with it shall transfer his possessions to the bishop of the Church. The transfer shall be by deed and covenant that cannot be broken. In order that the person so consecrating his properties shall have claim upon the bishop for a stewardship, the consecration must be full and complete. There must be no part of the property withheld.

Thereafter, the steward is held accountable for his stewardship. The surplus income—all over and above what he needs to support himself and his family—is consecrated to the general storehouse of the Lord, as was all his property at the first. Each steward has a common claim on the general storehouse for all that he may need; and as long as he proves a faithful steward, the treasurer of the storehouse must honor his demands.

The successful operation of such an order as this is predicated, of course, upon obedience to specific laws. Any violation of the basic principles of the law must necessarily bring disorganization to the order. The law of Consecration, or the United Order of God, was observed for a while in both Kirtland and Independence. Indeed, the acquiring successfully of the lands of Jackson county depended upon the righteous fulfillment of the principles of the United Order. "For I, the Lord," we read in one of the revelations, "have decreed in my heart, that inasmuch as any man belonging to the order, shall be found a transgressor, or, in other words, shall

break the covenant with which ye are bound, he shall be cursed in his life, and shall be trodden down by whom I will."^o But the people of Zion did not "hearken altogether unto the precepts and commandments which I [the Lord] gave unto them."^p Their enemies came down upon them and drove them from the lands they had purchased, and the homes they had provided by tireless labor. Twelve thousand or more, in number, they were forced out of the country of their desire. Four years before their banishment the Lord had said in revelation:

"Behold, I say unto you, were it not for the transgressions of my people, speaking concerning the Church and not individuals, they might have been redeemed even now, but, behold, they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I required at their hands, but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of their substance, as becometh saints, to the poor and afflicted among them and are not united according to the union required by the law of the celestial kingdom; and Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom, otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself."^q

In this way was revealed another act in the drama of the Restoration. Since the time of the revelation quoted above, the United Order has never been successfully practiced in the Church. But the fault

^oDoc. and Cov. 104:5.

^pDoc. and Cov. 103:4.

^qDoc. and Cov. 105:2-5.

lies with the Church members, not with the revelation. To meet our lower possibilities, there must be given a lower law to train us to the higher.

The lower law revealed to succeed the law of consecration is the law of tithing. It cannot take the place of the higher law. That law is eternal; and will supersede the lower law when we shall become prepared for it. Like the law of Moses, the law of tithing is a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. This law was revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith July 8, 1838, and requires that every Church member shall pay into the storehouse of the Church one-tenth of all his interest annually. The revelation on tithing reads as follows:

“Revelation given through Joseph, the Prophet, at Far West, Missouri, July 8, 1838, in answer to the question, O Lord, show unto thy servants how much thou requirest of the properties of the people for a tithing?”

“Verily, thus saith the Lord, I require all their surplus property to be put into the hands of the bishop of my Church of Zion, for the building of mine house, and for the laying of the foundation of Zion and for the Priesthood, and for the debts of the Presidency of my Church; and this shall be the beginning of the tithing of my people; and after that, those who have thus been tithed, shall pay one-tenth of all their interest annually; and this shall be a standing law unto them for ever, for my holy Priesthood, saith the Lord.

“Verily I say unto you, it shall come to pass, that all those who gather unto the land of Zion shall be tithed of their surplus properties, and shall observe this law, or they shall not be found worthy to abide among you.

“And I say unto you, if my people observe not this law, to keep it holy, and by this law sanctify the land of Zion unto me, that my statutes and my judgments may be kept thereon, that it may be most holy, behold, verily I say unto you, it shall not be a land of Zion unto you; and this shall be an ensample unto all the Stakes of Zion. Even so. Amen.”^r

It will be observed that this remarkable revelation provides two things: First, “all those who gather unto the land of Zion shall be tithed of their surplus properties;” secondly, “those who have thus been tithed, shall pay one-tenth of all their interest annually.” The fund so established is the revenue of the Church. With it the expenses of Church organization are met; Church schools are maintained; lands are purchased for the public good; public buildings are erected; temples and meeting-houses are built; the borders of Zion are extended; the wants of the poor are supplied; and the Gospel is published abroad among the nations of the earth.

But the law of tithing, like the law of the United Order, is not original with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was practiced by holy men of God in very ancient times. For example, we read in the Hebrew Scriptures that Abram

^rDoc. and Cov. Sec. 119.

paid Melchizedek tithes of all that he had;^s that Jacob covenanted with his God to pay Him a tenth of all his increase;^t and that even the Scribes and the Pharisees in the days of Jesus knew and practiced the law of tithing." Moreover, it is quite evident that the law of tithing was considered a sacred commandment with a promise. Said the Lord, through the prophet Malachi, "Bring ye all the tithes unto the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts."^v On the other hand, disobedience to the law of tithing was known to arouse the righteous indignation of the Lord. Said the Lord again, through the prophet Malachi, rebuking the disobedient children of Israel, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation."^w

So, also, in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, the law of tithing is a sacred commandment with a promise and a penalty. "Behold, now it is

^sGenesis 14.

^tGenesis 28:22.

^uMatt. 23:23.

^vMalachi 3:10, 11.

^wMalachi 3:8, 9.

called today (until the coming of the Son of man), and verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people! for he that is tithed shall not be burned" [at His coming].^x Moreover, in the revelation on tithing itself, the Lord declares that if His people "observe not this law to keep it holy, and by this law sanctify the land of Zion. * * * it shall not be a land of Zion" unto them. Obedience to the law of tithing is therefore *required* of every member of the Church. A man cannot be in full fellowship with his God and with his fellow-worshippers if he neglects to observe the law. "While the living of any one law of the gospel adds to one's power to live and enjoy every other law, the living of no one law will secure salvation. Faithful tithe-paying makes the humble wage earner and the drawer of large dividends, equal on the Lord's ledger. Each has fulfilled the law; neither has done more. While tithe paying alone is not sufficient to keep a man in the Church, yet he cannot retain his standing to the end without it."^y

The paying honestly, then, into the storehouse of the Lord of one-tenth of one's interest annually, is a sacred duty not to be considered lightly. Until we shall have reached a stage sufficiently near perfection to enable us to live the higher law of the United Order, we are under divine command to observe the lesser law of tithing. It, too, is a means of establishing the eternal brotherhood of man.

^xDoc. and Cov. 64:23.

^yGeorge H. Brimhall, "Tithing," p. 3.

XVIII.

A NEW AND EVERLASTING COVENANT.

It is a remarkable feature of the message of the Prophet Joseph Smith, that, it is broad and comprehensive in its purpose of saving the human race, yet it is applicable to the struggling life of the poorest of God's children. Indeed, therein lies in part at least the superiority of the restored Gospel over every other creed or system of philosophy known to man. It does not center its efforts toward reform in the community at large, though its principles of reform comprehend the community; but it strikes at the individual and sets him right, knowing that with the individual right the community cannot be wrong. This, I take it, is the basic principle of the Gospel Brotherhood of the United Order of God. To collect a number of unrepentant sinners and convicts; to organize them into an ideal brotherhood; to hope that they will learn as a community to know the ways of God—is indeed Utopian. The hope cannot be realized. But to convert the individual; to gather the converted individuals, to organize them in a United Order; to hope then that there will develop an ideal community—is anything but Utopian. When the individual is right, the community must be right. If the community fails, the fault lies with the individual.

It becomes of first importance, then, in the Church

of Christ, to inspire every member of it with ideals of purity, honor, and integrity. For that reason, the new revelation taught faith in God and in His Son Jesus Christ; a sincere repentance, or turning away from evil; baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, in token of one's humility and integrity of purpose; the imposition of hands by those holding divine authority, to confirm the candidate a member of the Church and to entitle him to the presence and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; and, ever afterwards, a careful observance of the great commandments, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. * * * Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."^a Thus the proper spiritual condition of the individual was well provided for. It is only because the love of self remains stronger than the love of God and the love of neighbor, that the perfect law of the Order of Enoch fails in its operation.

But the individual seldom, if ever, lives alone. While it is true that the individual must be right if the community is to be right, yet the individual is after all not the center of influence in community life. That center is to be found rather in the home. There, two are bound together by sacred ties of love and worship; and others, by endearing bands of kinship. In the home, the spiritual conditions of the father and the mother—the directing individuals of a community in miniature—determine in large meas-

^aMatt. 22:37-39.

ure the lives of the children. As these children are trained in the home—nay, as the father and mother hold sacred the marriage relation—so will the family wield an influence for good or evil in the whole community life. This truth was recognized by the prophets of old. And when the Gospel came to be restored, we should expect to find revealed wonderful, sublime truths concerning the sanctity of the family relationship.

It is not to be wondered at if Joseph Smith began early to consider the question of family life and marriage. In the years 1830 and 1831, very soon after the Church was organized, he began the inspired “translation” of the Scriptures. He met there the histories of the ancient patriarchs and prophets. He observed in these histories—as in that of Jacob and his twelve sons, for example—how the family life was held sacred, and the family relationship in honor. Naturally, in this case as in so many others in the story of the Restoration, questions were aroused in the mind of the Prophet. What is the nature of the marriage relationship in the sight of God? What will be the condition of men and women in the future life? Of what importance is the family relationship either here or hereafter?

There is abundant evidence that the Prophet Joseph Smith received probably as early as 1831 revelations on these important questions. Because, however, the people were not yet prepared to receive the great truths that had been revealed to him, the revelations were withheld for many years. In a revela-

tion of the year 1831, the Prophet said only, concerning marriage, "that whoso forbiddeth to marry is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man; wherefore it is lawful that he should have one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation."^b

It was not until July 12, 1843,^c that the glorious truths concerning the sanctity and eternity of the marriage covenant—long before revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith—were committed to writing and read by his friends. Even then, not all that had been given to him was revealed to his followers. But in the publication of as much as he gave, another step in the great drama of the Restoration was enacted. Owing to the persecutions to which the early Saints were subjected, the revelation was not officially published until 1852, five years after the wearisome tramp across the plains to the Rocky Mountains.

And what is this famous Section 132 of the Book of Modern Scripture? On analysis the revelation falls into twelve distinct parts, as follows:

^bDoc. and Cov. 49:15-17.

^cAt the conference held August 17, 1835, in which the Book of Doctrine and Covenants was adopted, an article on marriage was read by William W. Phelps. This article was accepted by the vote of the conference and was printed in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. The article was not a revelation, however, nor indeed was it so received by the general assembly of the Priesthood. The Prophet Joseph Smith knew nothing of the article. He was absent, in Canada, when it was accepted by the conference.

(a.) The introduction. The revelation is given in response to inquiry. The Lord is about to reveal a new and everlasting covenant. Verses 1 to 6.

(b.) The New and Everlasting Covenant is defined. Marriage is not only for time but for all eternity. Verses 7 to 14.

(c.) An illustration. The condition of those married by civil authority only, is explained. Verses 15 to 18.

(d.) An illustration. The condition of those married by the authority of the Holy Priesthood, is explained. Verses 19 to 20.

(e.) A warning. Those who do not observe this law of the Priesthood cannot attain a fulness of God's glory. The unpardonable sin is defined. Verses 21 to 27.

(f.) The acts of Abraham and other patriarchs of old are justified. Verses 28 to 39.

(g.) The sin of adultery is defined. Verses 40 to 45.

(h.) The sealing power of the Priesthood is explained. Verses 46 to 50.

(i.) Special instructions are given to Emma Smith, the wife of the Prophet. Verses 51 to 57.

(j.) The law of the Priesthood respecting plurality of wives is stated. Verses 58 to 64.

(k.) The duty of the husband to the wife, and the wife to the husband in this law of the Priesthood is explained. Verses 64 to 65.

(l.) Conclusion. More will be revealed hereafter. Verse 66.

It will be observed that the basic thought in this revelation is that marriage shall be, not only for a time, but for all eternity. This is the principle of the New and Everlasting Covenant. "All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made, and entered into, and sealed, by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity—are of no efficacy, virtue or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end, have an end when men are dead."^d Applied to the doctrine of marriage, this statement means that when two are united in marriage outside of the authority of the Church, their union can last only till death parts them. They are then not bound by any law when they are out of the world. And in that other world which is to come, they will be appointed angels, or ministering servants, to those who are worthy of a greater glory. The marriage ceremony belongs to this earth and must be accomplished here.

If, however, a man marry a wife by the new and everlasting covenant—and is sealed to her and she to him by the authority of the holy priesthood—the covenant and contract between them will be of force worlds without end. Death may part them for a passing time, but it cannot separate them. In the resurrection they will meet again. In the life to come they will resume their happy, sacred relations

^dDoc. and Cov. 132:7.

as husband and wife. They will inherit the thrones and kingdoms, principalities and powers, promised to the faithful. And they will "pass by the angels, and the Gods, who are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds for ever and ever."^e

It must be remembered, however, that these promises can be claimed only on the evidence of unimpeachable faithfulness. "The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost," says the Lord in one part of the revelation on marriage, "which shall not be forgiven in the world, nor out of the world, is in that ye commit murder, wherein ye shed innocent blood, and assent unto my death, after ye have received my new and everlasting covenant, saith the Lord God; and he that abideth not this law, can in no wise enter into my glory, but shall be damned, saith the Lord."^f

By the word of the Lord Himself, then, murder is placed as the most awful crime that a man who has entered into this covenant can commit. And coming close after it is the sin of infidelity to the marriage covenant. The new and everlasting covenant prescribes a perfectly moral and faithful relationship in marriage. The Lord defines the sin of adultery, and condemns it. Nor does He allow in the least a double standard of morality. The new and everlasting order of marriage prescribes purity of the home, and sacred fidelity to

^eDoc. and Cov. 132:19.

^fDoc. and Cov. 132:27.

the marriage covenant. The great promises of future glory can be realized only through a faithful observance of the new and everlasting covenant.

No more sublime principle has ever been given to man than this of the sanctity and eternity of the marriage contract. Through it, the home becomes more than ever the center of community life. The father and the mother, if they continue faithful, are bound together by everlasting ties. And their children, too, become theirs throughout eternity. Death can have no fears for them. The grave has lost its victory. For they know they shall rise again from death and the grave; and then they shall mingle again as father and mother and children, and the relations so happily begun here will be continued forever there. In such a home may be found true happiness. But to gain such happiness, both parties to the marriage contract must have faith in the divine ordinance; it must be performed by the authority of the priesthood of God. If the ordinance be not so performed, neither the man nor the woman can attain the fulness of the glory of God. "In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees," we read in the revelation numbered section 131; "and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the Priesthood (meaning the New and Everlasting Covenant of marriage)."^g

It will be observed, further, that the revelation on marriage contemplates a plurality of wives. The practice of plural marriage brought bitter persecution

^gDoc. and Cov. 131:1, 2.

upon the Church, however. The Congress of the United States took action against the practice and demanded that it cease. Accordingly every effort has been put forth, and that strenuously, to suppress plural marriages. The solemnization of plural marriage in the Church has been entirely discontinued. The Lord has said that when we strive to do His will and our enemies prevent us, He will accept our endeavor.

Meanwhile, the basic principle of the sanctity and eternity of the marriage covenant remains unimpugned. It is still fundamental in the social organization of the Church. While the world goes on marrying and divorcing, and committing a thousand violations of the laws of both God and man, the children of the Latter-day Saints are born in purity, reared in holiness, and trained in the fear of God. They are taught that marriage is a sacred relationship; that the ordinance of uniting two in marriage should be performed in a sacred place with the sanction and by the authority of Almighty God; that then the marriage relationship does not end with this life, but continues through the countless ages yet unborn. How can children so reared look with the least degree of favor upon the social evil—divorce? How can they wink at even the mildest forms of immorality and vice so common in the world today? Their watchword is evermore:

“For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.”^h

^hDoc. and Cov. 1:31.

XIX.

THE VISION OF GLORIES.

It is related by the Venerable Bede that, when King Edwin became persuaded by the Christian missionary, Paulinus, to adopt the new faith of the Christ, he called a council of his wise men and asked of every one what he thought of the new doctrine. One of the king's chief men, approving the king's actions, as also his words, said :

"The present life of man, O king, seems to me, in comparison of that time which is unknown to us, like to the swift flight of a sparrow through the room wherein you sit at supper in winter, with your commanders and ministers, and a good fire in the midst, whilst the storms of rain and snow prevail abroad; the sparrow, I say, flying in at one door, and immediately out at another, whilst he is within, is safe from the wintry storm; but after a short space of fair weather, he immediately vanishes out of your sight, into the dark winter from which he had emerged. So this life of man appears for a short space, but of what went before, or what is to follow, we are utterly ignorant. If, therefore, this new doctrine contains something more certain, it seems justly to deserve to be followed."^a

Certainly, Christianity had something more satis-

^aBede's Ecclesiastical History, bk. II, ch. 3.

ying concerning both the herebefore and the hereafter than had the pagan worship of the barbarous tribes of England. Those tribes became Christian, therefore; and as they became Christian, so the whole civilized world has become Christian.

But the question raised by the king's chief man of old is little better answered now than it was then. To a multitude of Christian men, life is still as the flight of a sparrow from the outer storm and darkness, through a lighted hall, and out into the unknowable darkness again. True, Christianity explained originally both what was before and what was to come. But much of what was first taught has been lost. The word of the Lord to Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations,"^b—is a dark saying to the world. So also is the word of Jesus, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you."^c

These questions are now again clearly answered in the story of the Restoration. As early as June, 1830, only two months after the Church was organized, the question of the previous state of man was clearly answered by the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was then that he received the revelation known as the "Visions of Moses." The Prophet was told that God created all things spiritually before they were formed

^bJeremiah 1:5.

^cJohn 14:2.

naturally upon the earth; that the spirits of all men were present with God from the beginning, and convened in council with Him to consider the creation of the earth; and that the children of God shouted for joy when the earth was formed, and given shape, and appointed to become the home of man.^d In like manner, the Book of Abraham, translated by the power of God, teaches the same divine truths. There, too, God is represented as standing in the midst of the spirits of heaven. Some of them are great and noble. These, the Father selects to become prophets, kings, and leaders to him, in the earth-life.^e Thus, are the dark sayings of the Jewish scriptures, referring to a pre-existent state made plain.

The earth-life, then, is no longer like the flight of a sparrow from an unknown outer darkness into a lighted hall. We know whence we came. Our advent here is but the process of graduation, or promotion, from a lower life to a higher. There, we had progressed in the experience of the spirit. To advance further, we must pass from the spiritual state to the temporal state, and gain experiences unattainable there. The present life is in continuation of the life before. And there is yet to come in continuation a life hereafter.

As the Prophet Joseph Smith revealed the condition of man in the life before this, so he revealed also the condition of man when this life shall be ended. Early in the year 1832, the Prophet had attended a

^dPearl of Great Price, Book of Moses, chs. 1-5.

^ePearl of Great Price, Book of Abraham, chs. 3, 4, 5.

conference of the Church held at Amherst. On his return home from that conference, he resumed the translation of the Scriptures, which had occupied him for nearly two years. Undoubtedly, many questions arose in his mind as the work progressed. Among others came to him also the question of man's future state.

"From sundry revelations which had been received," he writes, "it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of man, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled. It appeared self-evident from what truths were left that if God rewarded every one according to the deeds done in the body the term 'Heaven' as intended for the Saints' eternal home, must include more kingdoms than one."^f

On February 16, 1832, the word of the Lord came with power. Joseph was accompanied this time by Sidney Rigdon. Suddenly the visions of heaven opened before them, and they were permitted to see both the damnation and the exaltation of men hereafter. They were commanded to write the vision as they saw it. It forms now Section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants. As a revelation, it is one of the noblest sections in the sacred Book of Today. Analyzed, the section falls naturally into eleven parts.

1. The introduction. The Lord will reveal His mysteries to the faithful. Verses 1 to 10.

2. Explanation. The circumstances under which

^f"History of the Church," Vol. I, p. 245

the vision was given are stated. Verses 11 to 18.

3. The beginning of the vision. Joseph and Sidney behold the glory of the Son on the right hand of God. Verses 19 to 24.

4. Lucifer, a Son of the Morning, is cast out of heaven. The Elders are commanded to write the vision. Verses 25 to 30.

5. The vision of the sons of perdition. They are they who crucify Christ unto themselves. The special mission of the Christ is explained. Verses 31 to 49.

6. The resurrection of the just. The condition of those who come forth in this resurrection is explained. The celestial glory. Verses 50 to 70.

7. Terrestrial world. The condition of those who attain the second glory is described. Verses 71 to 80.

8. The glory of the telestial. The condition of those who attain the telestial is described. Verses 81 to 89.

9. A summary. The degrees of glory are compared. Verses 90 to 98.

10. The glory of the telestial. The condition of those who attain the third glory is further described. Verses 99 to 113.

11. Conclusion. Many things revealed which cannot be written. Verses 114 to 119.

It appears from the doctrine of this revelation that all God's children will ultimately be saved, except the sons of perdition. Fortunately it is not easy to become a son of perdition. To become a son of

perdition, one must deny the fulness of the light of the everlasting Gospel after having experienced it; one must defy the power of God after having known it and partaken of it; one must deny the Holy Spirit after having received it; one must consent to the crucifixion of the only Begotten Son of the Father, and to the putting of Him to open shame. On such a one only shall the second death have power. "For all the rest shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead, through the triumph and the glory of the Lamb, who was slain, who was in the bosom of the Father, before the worlds were made."^g

However, "all the rest" shall not come forth to equal glory. As there are three degrees of brilliancy in the heavens, represented figuratively by the sun, the moon, and the stars, so there are three degrees of glory in the future life; and as the stars in heaven differ in magnitude, so do the degrees of exaltation within the glories differ the one from the other. "In my Father's house," said Jesus, "are many mansions." Each of the children of God will be assigned in the future life to the mansion for which he has qualified. In other words, men will be judged by the deeds done while in the body, and will be rewarded according to their works.

Thus, those only will attain the celestial glory who have been faithful in all things. They have kept the commandments of God, and have been sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise. They are the Church of the

^gDoc. and Cov. 76:39.

First Born; they are priests and kings who receive of the fulness of His glory. "They are Gods, even the sons of God" and "shall dwell in the presence of God and His Christ for ever and ever."

The terrestrial world, however, consists of those who have not been valiant in the testimony of Jesus, as have those of the celestial. They are those who died without law, "who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it." They are honorable men of the earth, who could not see the light for the craftiness of men. They are men who were not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; therefore, they could not obtain the crown over the kingdom of God. These receive the presence of the Son, but do not receive the fulness of the Father.

Finally, even those who have violated the commandments of God will be saved in the telestial glory, so only they have not committed the unpardonable sin. These are men who did not receive the everlasting Gospel when the opportunity was at hand, but who did not deny the Holy Spirit. They are sinners and breakers of the law, and are cast in punishment to the depths of hell. Thence they can be redeemed only at the last resurrection. But in the end they will be saved, and exalted according to their merits, in the telestial kingdom. There they do not receive the administration of the Father or the Son, "but of the Holy Spirit through the ministration of the terrestrial." Theirs is the lowest order of salvation.

Every man, then, will receive the reward for which he qualifies. Either we shall be lost, with the

sons of perdition, or we shall be saved in one of the kingdoms of glory. And if we are saved we may continue further to grow. As in this life we must go either forward or backward, so in the future life, we must either advance or retrograde. There is no such thing as standing still. There is no level plain, the summit of all things, above which ascend no heights. There is no end to advancement. Eternal progression is the principle upon which the gospel is based. Eternal progression was an active principle when the words began; it is active still; it will continue to be active worlds without end. When we shall be graduated, then, from this life into the future one, we shall not pass merely from a field of endeavor and profitable activity into one of lethargic idleness. There will be work for us still to do. We shall find our time happily occupied. The principle of eternal progression will require of us all eternal, ceaseless activity.

These principles, together with those in the previous chapters, are among the most noble ever given to man. The announcement of them places Joseph Smith far and away above the heads of the philosophers of the world. It is a crowning act in the great drama of the Restoration.

XX.

IN THE MOUTHS OF WITNESSES.

It is wonderful how the Lord of heaven has safeguarded every act in the story of the Restoration, that there may be no question as to its actuality. That Joseph Smith was a great prophet there can be no question. He will remain forever the divinely appointed leader of the dispensation of the fulness of times. His work is sufficient to establish his claim as a prophet. The far-reaching results that have followed his ministry are sufficient evidence of his divine inspiration. Founded in the midst of the age of science and progress, the system he introduced is "a marvelous work and a wonder." There are, however, enemies innumerable to the restoration who do not hesitate to cast doubt upon it. "How shall we know," ask the opponents of the Prophet, "that he really saw a vision, or that he received authority from heaven? Is it not possible that he was himself deceived about those things? Or is it not possible even that he lied deliberately about them? The word of the Prophet alone may be sufficient for you who have been converted to believe in him; but to us who do not believe in him, what evidence can be given to us that we may know that he was neither deceived nor deceiving?" The question is fair, and to it can be made a fair answer:

—Not a single important step in the progress of the restoration was taken without corroborative testimony or the presence of witnesses.

This assertion may seem both broad and rash. On that beautiful morning in the early spring of 1820, when the boy, Joseph Smith, went into the grove to pray, he went alone. He took no boon companion with him, nor did he even reveal to his mother the purpose of his visit to the grove. And when the Father and the Son appeared to him in glorious vision, he was still alone. No other mortal was present during that wonderful appearance. How, then can anyone bear corroborative testimony of the actuality of that vision?

Joseph Smith claims to have seen no further visions for some three and a half years. But when he retired on the evening of the twenty-first of September, 1823, he prayed earnestly to the Lord to vouchsafe him some further word as to the nature of his mission upon earth. Joseph Smith was alone then. He had no friend with him in his room. He sent for neither father, nor mother, nor brother, nor sister. In the privacy of his own chamber he prayed, pouring out his heart to his God. And in answer to the fervent prayer, an angel of heaven appeared in another glorious vision. It was Moroni, a Nephite, a resurrected being. Three times he appeared to the boy that night and once in the forenoon of the following day. Four times, then, in about twelve hours, the angel Moroni—so the Prophet claims—appeared to him, and each time the boy was alone. No other

living mortal was near. Again it may be asked, How can anyone bear corroborative testimony to the actuality of these visions?

On the day following the visions of the night, Joseph told his father what he had seen. The father believed the story told by his son. He counseled the boy to do whatever the angel had commanded him to do. Now, the angel Moroni had shown Joseph, in vision, a low hill not very far from his own home. In that hill were buried the sacred records of the Nephites, and Joseph was required to visit the hill to see the sacred treasure. Accordingly, following his father's counsel, Joseph Smith set out near mid-day of September twenty-second, 1823, to visit the hill, Cumorah, shown him in vision. But he went alone; he took no companion with him. When he had reached the place of the vision, and had uncovered the golden plates, the angel Moroni appeared again, the fifth time. He instructed the boy in his life-work, and required that he should return to the hill annually, on the same day of the month, for four years, that he might be further instructed in the work he had to do. Accordingly, Joseph Smith went to the same place on the hill, Cumorah, on the twenty-second of September, for four consecutive years. Each time he went alone. He was accompanied by neither friend nor foe. And each time the angel, Moroni, appeared to him and instructed him. The last time, September twenty-second, 1827, the plates of the Nephite record were delivered to the young man, and he was commanded to translate it.

Thus, the Prophet claims that the angel, Moroni, appeared to him five different times on the hill Cumorah, and instructed him in his work. But each time the Prophet was alone. How, then, can anyone bear corroborative testimony of the actuality of these visions? Ten visions the Prophet saw alone, at the beginning of his very interesting career. Never was he accompanied at any of these visions by mortal man. It seems then that the assertion must fail, that not a single important step in the progress of the restoration was taken without corroborative testimony or the presence of witnesses.

However, the work of the young prophet went steadily on. By 1829 the Nephite record was translated, and during that year it was published under the caption, "The Book of Mormon." Before the book was given to the world the Lord had said in revelation that there should be three special witnesses to the book.^a In the book itself, too, three witnesses were predicted.^b Moreover, it was further said that there should be other witnesses—"a few according to the will of God, to bear testimony to His word to the children of men."^c In June, 1829, the three special witnesses were appointed by revelation.^d And some time afterwards, eight others were selected to bear testimony to the fact that Joseph Smith was in actual possession of the plates of the Book of Mor-

^aDoc. and Cov. 5:11-15.

^bII Nephi 11; Ether 5:4.

^cII Nephi 27:12-13.

^dDoc. and Cov. 17.

mon. It will be interesting to examine the testimonies of these eleven men, to learn how they affect the early visions of the Prophet, as well as the book itself and the later work of the Church.

The three witnesses called by revelation to testify to the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon were Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. All three men became associated with the Prophet soon after he began the translation of the Nephite record. Martin Harris and Oliver Cowdery had acted as scribes for the Prophet; and David Whitmer had rendered much material assistance and encouragement. It was many days after the receiving of the revelation that named the three witnesses that they agreed, with the Prophet, to retire to the wood, "and try to obtain, by fervent and humble prayer, the fulfillment of the promises given in the * * * revelation—that they should have a view of the plates."^e Accordingly they retired to a grove near David Whitmer's house and began their supplications to the Lord to fulfill the promise made to them.

It seemed at first, however, that their prayers were ineffectual. The heavens were as brass above their heads. No manifestation of divine favor appeared to encourage them. Each one of the four prayed earnestly and fervently, as his turn came, but without avail. A second time they prayed in rotation, but still without result. What could be the matter

^e"History of the Church," Vol. I, p. 54.

that their prayers were not answered? Some time before this, Martin Harris had prevailed upon the Prophet to allow him to take a number of pages of the manuscript translation of the Nephite record to show them to certain members of his own family. Harris had bound himself by sacred covenant not to exceed the privilege specified, and to return the manuscript uninjured. Unfortunately, however, Martin Harris had lost the manuscript entrusted to him. The loss had caused great embarrassment to the Prophet, and had brought upon Harris for a time the disfavor of the Lord.^f When now the fervent prayers of the Prophet and the special witnesses remained unanswered, Martin Harris suggested that he would perhaps better withdraw, since undoubtedly it was because of his presence that their efforts were fruitless.

The three remaining ones then knelt again in prayer. "[We] had not been many minutes engaged in prayer," writes the Prophet, "when presently we beheld a light above us in the air, of exceeding brightness; and behold, an angel stood before us. In his hands he held the plates which we had been praying for these to have a view of. He turned over the leaves one by one, so that we could see them, and discern the engravings thereon distinctly. He then addressed himself to David Whitmer, and said, 'David, blessed is the Lord, and he that keeps His commandments;' when, immediately

^f"History of the Church," Vol. I, p. 21.

afterwards, we heard a voice from out of the bright light above us, saying, 'These plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by the power of God. The translation of them which you have seen is correct, and I command you to bear record of what you now see and hear.' ^g

The vision was ended. David Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery had obtained their desire. They had beheld the plates in the hands of an angel; and they had heard the voice of the angel, and another voice from heaven declaring the correctness of the translation made by the Prophet. It was a marvelous manifestation; these men could not but testify of what they had seen and heard.

In the meantime, Martin Harris was in another part of the wood pleading with the Lord. Earlier in the day, the Prophet had said to him solemnly, "Martin Harris, you have got to humble yourself before your God this day, that you may obtain a forgiveness of your sins. If you do, it is the will of God that you should look upon the plates in company with Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer."^h But Martin Harris had not sufficiently humbled himself. The testimony from heaven was not given until Martin had withdrawn from his friends. He began then more fully to appreciate his unworthiness. He retired some distance from his brethren, and began there to supplicate the Lord, striving earnestly so to

^g"History of the Church," Vol. I, pp. 54, 55.

^hLucy Smith, 'History of the Prophet Joseph,' ch. 31.

abase the pride of his spirit that he might receive the divine favor.

It was in this frame of mind, and thus occupied, that the Prophet found him at the close of the angelic visit. The spirit of Martin Harris was thoroughly humbled. He besought the Prophet earnestly to join him in his supplications. He craved earnestly the sublime testimony that had been given his associates. Accordingly, the Prophet knelt again with him in prayer. "And ultimately [we] obtained our desires," writes the Prophet, "for before we had yet finished the same vision was opened to our view, at least it was again opened to me, and I once more beheld and heard the same things; whilst at the same moment, Martin Harris cried out, apparently in an ecstasy of joy, 'Tis enough; 'tis enough; mine eyes have beheld; mine eyes have beheld;' and jumping up, he shouted, 'Hosanna,' blessing God, and otherwise rejoiced exceedingly."

The three chosen witnesses to the Book of Mormon had, then, all received their testimonies by divine manifestation. The fact that Martin Harris experienced considerable difficulty in obtaining the testimony, and that he overcame that difficulty is significant. It adds materially to the reality and the value of the testimony, that the three, though separated in the actual seeing of the vision, can yet bear testimony to the same manifestation in every detail. And all three did bear testimony. Just after the title-

ⁱ"History of the Church," Vol. I, p. 55.

page, in the Book of Mormon, appears "The Testimony of Three Witnesses."ⁱ This testimony is declared "with words of soberness;" and those who gave it to the world never once faltered in its defense.

Besides these three, there were others also who were favored to see and handle the original plates of the Book of Mormon. These others, however, were not shown the plates by divine manifestation. It was soon after the testimony of three witnesses had been obtained through the ministrations of an angel. The Prophet, Joseph Smith, had gone from Fayette to Manchester to arrange for the printing of the Book of Mormon. He was accompanied by Hiram Page, and several of the Whitmers. At Manchester, he was joined by Joseph Smith, Sr., Hyrum Smith, and Samuel H. Smith. The company thus consisted of the Prophet, with Christian Whitmer, Jacob Whitmer, Peter Whitmer, Jr., John Whitmer, Hiram Page, Joseph Smith, Sr., Hyrum Smith, and Samuel H. Smith. The Prophet himself showed to the eight witnesses the original plates of the Nephite record. It was a plain, matter-of-fact exhibition. The witnesses not only saw the plates, but handled them, and examined the engravings on them. And "with words of soberness" they, too, testified of what they had seen.

It is small wonder that, in the light of the evidence here presented, it is asserted that the "Book of Mor-

ⁱSee Chapter VI.

mon" is the best authenticated sacred record of which the history of the world can boast. Eleven witnesses, on their honor, testify that they have seen and examined the plates from which the translation was made. Three of them testify further that an angel appeared before them and assured them that the translation of the engravings on the plates was accomplished by the power of God, and was correct. What better or stronger testimony could be required? In the case of the "Book of Mormon," at least, the assertion is true, that not a single important step in the progress of the restoration was taken without corroborative testimony or the presence of witnesses.

It will be interesting now to return briefly to the first ten visions, and learn what effect the testimonies of the eleven witnesses have upon them. Unquestionably, the nine visits of the angel, Moroni, looked to the translation of the sacred plates as well as to the restoration of the fulness of the gospel. On the first night of his appearance to the boy-prophet, the angel showed the boy in vision the hill Cumorah, and the place where the plates were hidden. The next day he met the boy on the sacred hill. Once a year for four years thereafter, the angel and the boy met at the place where the plates lay concealed. And at every meeting of the two, the theme between them was largely the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. It is true that at each ministration of the Angel Moroni, Joseph Smith was alone with him. There were no eyewitnesses. Yet, in the light of the testimony borne by the three, there

can be no doubt that the angel did visit the prophet; and in the light of the additional testimony of the eight, there can be no reasonable doubt that the plates were delivered to him. The testimony of the eleven witnesses confirm the story of the visits of the angel Moroni. In this case, too, then, the assertion holds: Not a single important step in the progress of the restoration was taken without corroborative testimony or the presence of witnesses.

In a similar way, the testimonies of the eleven witnesses corroborate the story of the first glorious vision of the Father and the Son. It was in that vision that the boy-prophet first received his call. It was then that he learned that the religious world had gone astray, and that the God of heaven had a great work for him to do. That work was to restore the fulness of the Gospel. But the restoration of the Gospel involved the revelation of the "Book of Mormon," and the translation of the sacred record. Neither the revelation of the book nor the translation of it, could have been accomplished had the first vision been a delusion. In fact, the full subsequent history of the restoration depends upon the authenticity of that vision. It is not too much to say again then, that in the case of the first vision also, the assertion is established, that, not a single important step in the progress of the restoration was taken without corroborative testimony or the presence of witnesses.

Great weight is thus laid upon the testimonies of the three and the eight. Their solemn declarations

confirm the words of the Prophet concerning the opening acts of the restoration. Now, there are those who question the value of the testimonies of these eleven men. They assert that the witnesses were under the influence of the young Prophet—hypnotized by him; or that they were themselves parties to a tremendous fraud. It will be interesting to consider briefly what became of each one of these eleven men, and to learn how they viewed in later life the testimonies they had published to the world.

Oliver Cowdery was born at Wells, Rutland County, Vermont, in October, 1805. He met the Prophet, Joseph Smith, April 5th, 1829, became his scribe during the translation of the Book of Mormon, and was baptized with the Prophet in June, 1829. Oliver Cowdery rose to great prominence in the new Church. It appears, however, that he was possessed of serious weaknesses. In 1838, certain charges were preferred against him before the High Council at Far West. Some of the charges were sustained, and since he did not make satisfactory amends, Oliver Cowdery was excommunicated from the Church. He went thereupon to Michigan to practice law. Once, a fellow practitioner said to him, "Mr. Cowdery, I see your name is attached to this book [the 'Book of Mormon']". If you believe it to be true, why are you in Michigan?" After reading the names of the witnesses, he continued, "Mr. Cowdery, do you believe this book?"

"No, sir," responded Mr. Cowdery, quickly.

"But your name is attached to it," protested his

fellow-lawyer, "and you declare here that you saw an angel, and also the plates from which the book purports to be translated; and now you say you don't believe it. Which time did you tell the truth?"

"My name is attached to that book, and what I there have said is true," replied Oliver Cowdery with emphasis. "I did see this; I know I saw it, and faith has nothing to do with it, as a perfect knowledge has swallowed up the faith which I had in the work, knowing, as I do, that it is true."^k

And so it was always: Oliver Cowdery never wavered in his testimony. Surely, if he had been under the influence of Joseph Smith at the time of the angelic ministration, he was from under it now. Or if he had connived with Joseph Smith at a monstrous fraud, he was not concerned in it now that he had been cast off by the Church. This one bit of unwilling testimony is alone sufficient to establish the truth of the whole testimony of the three. Oliver Cowdery repented and joined the Church again in 1848, during the troublous days of the expulsion of the Church from Nauvoo. It is worthy of note that these were days of severe tribulation to the Church. Oliver Cowdery could gain nothing by rejoining it then. Moreover, the Prophet was dead. What Oliver Cowdery did in 1848, he did because of the deep conviction of his own soul, and not because of the influence of Joseph Smith. Oliver Cowdery died in 1850. His dying words were a changeless testi-

^k"Historical Record," pp. 200, 201.

mony of the divine truth of the "Book of Mormon."

David Whitmer, too, testified unchangeably to the truth of the testimony he had signed and given to the world. David Whitmer was born near Harrisburg, Pa., January 7th, 1805. He was baptized, June, 1829. Like Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer rose to prominence in the Church. Like Oliver Cowdery, he became estranged from the Church. On April thirteenth, 1838, several charges were preferred against him and sustained. Accordingly he was excommunicated from the Church. David Whitmer never at any time returned his allegiance to the Church. Yet, he bore an unchangeable, undying testimony to the divine truth of the "Book of Mormon."

In 1881, one John Murphy asserted that David Whitmer had denied his testimony as one of the three witnesses to the "Book of Mormon." David Whitmer immediately published in the *Conservator* of Richmond, Missouri, a refutation of the lie:

"That the world may know the truth," he wrote, "I wish now, standing as it were in the very sunset of life, and in the fear of God, once for all to make this public statement:

"That I have never at any time denied that testimony or any part thereof, which has so long since been published with that book, as one of the Three Witnesses. Those who know me best, well know that I have always adhered to that testimony. And that no man may be misled or doubt my present views in regard to the same, I do again affirm the

truth of all my statements as then made and published."¹

The Prophet, Joseph Smith, had been dead nearly forty years when this renewed testimony was published by David Whitmer. It would be the grossest kind of folly to assume that after more than forty years of independent life and thinking—apart from the Church founded by the Prophet, with the Prophet himself removed—David Whitmer was still under “hypnotic,” or other, influence of the Prophet. With his testimony so firm and unshaken, after so many years, it would be the height of folly to assume that David Whitmer was under any psychic subjection to the Prophet even at the time of the angelic ministration. And other false reason for subscribing to such a testimony there could be none. David Whitmer was not related to Joseph Smith. He was not interested with him in any business venture. He received no worldly benefits from his association with the new Church. In short, there was no reason under heaven why he should have abetted fraudulent purposes of Joseph Smith, had he been an impostor. David Whitmer’s testimony, then, like Oliver Cowdery’s, must remain forever unimpeached, the stronger for the reason that it remained as firm, as steadfast, after David Whitmer left the Church, as it ever was before. Whitmer died at Richmond, Mo., January twenty-fifth, 1888. On his deathbed he bore a last, irrefragable testimony to the divine au-

¹Quoted in “Historical Record,” pp. 210, 211.

thenticity of the "Book of Mormon," and the truth and integrity of the Testimony of the Three Witnesses.

Martin Harris was one of Joseph Smith's earliest and closest friends. Yet, his relations to the Prophet, like those of Oliver and David, became strained before the martyrdom of the Prophet. Martin Harris was born at Easttown, New York, May eighteenth, 1783. He met the young Prophet for the first time in 1827, soon after the Prophet had received from the angel the plates of the "Book of Mormon." He was baptized soon after the organization of the Church, in 1830. Martin Harris, too, was honored in the new Church. He held several positions of distinction, and as long as the Saints lived in Kirtland, he was active in the performance of his duties. When, however, the Saints moved to Missouri, Harris remained in Ohio. Rumors spread that he had apostatized. Martin Harris never wavered, however, in his testimony to the "Book of Mormon." After the martyrdom of the Prophet, Martin Harris came under the influence of the apostate leader, James J. Strang. While under that influence, he went to England, in 1846, ostensibly to oppose the Mormon elders laboring there, and to misrepresent the Church. It seems, however, that he did no harm to anyone. In 1870, Harris came to Utah, and located in Smithfield. Five years later, in 1875, he died at Clarkston, nearly ninety-three years of age.

Thirty-one years had passed since the Prophet was slain, and forty-six years had passed since the mir-

aculous manifestation in which Martin Harris saw the angel and the plates. Many things had happened during the long life. While Martin Harris had never actually left the Church, he had become estranged, and was not in full fellowship for many years. Yet, in spite of his varied experiences, his testimony never faltered. And like Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer, his dying words were in confirmation of the testimony he had given forty-six years before.

"[Martin Harris] was taken sick a week ago yesterday," writes Martin Harris, Jr., under date of July ninth, 1875, "with some kind of stroke, or life became so weak and exhausted, that he has no use in his limbs. He cannot move, only by our aid. * * * He has continued to talk about and testify to the truth of the "Book of Mormon," and was in his happiest mood when he could get somebody to listen to his testimony; if he felt dull and weary at times, and some one would come in and open up a conversation and give him an opportunity of talking, he would immediately revive and felt like a young man for a little while."^m In this mood he passed away, brightening the last moments of his long life with the fervor of his testimony to the truth of the "Book of Mormon."

All three of the special witnesses to the divinity of the "Book of Mormon," became estranged from the Prophet and his work. In spite of all estrangement, however, and even bitterness, they were stead-

^mQuoted in "Historical Record," p. 214.

fast to the last in affirming the truth of their great testimony. Not one of them wavered; not one of them weakened; not one of them gave that testimony the lie, either while in the Church or while out of it. And as the three were true to the last, so also were the eight.

Christian Whitmer died November twenty-seventh, 1835, in full fellowship in the Church. Jacob Whitmer withdrew from the Church in 1838, and died April twenty-first, 1856, without returning to it. Peter Whitmer, Jr., died September twenty-second, in full fellowship in the Church. John Whitmer was excommunicated from the Church March tenth, 1838. He died out of the Church July eleventh, 1878. Hiram Page withdrew from the Church in 1838. He died outside of the faith August twelfth, 1852. Joseph Smith, Sr., died in full fellowship in the Church September fourteenth, 1840. Hyrum Smith died a martyr to the cause of Truth June twenty-seventh, 1844. Samuel Harrison Smith died in full membership, July thirtieth, 1844.

Three of the eight witnesses left the Church and died out of it. It is a remarkable fact, however, that not only the five who remained true to the Church, but the other three also, remained true to the testimony they had borne to the Book of Mormon. No one of them ever denied a word of that testimony. Most of them survived the Prophet many years. Whatever influence he had exerted over them in life was surely removed by death. But

after his death, as well as during his life, these eight witnesses were firm in their assertion that they had seen the plates of the "Book of Mormon," and had examined them. No amount of persecution ever made them swerve from that direct truth. No amount of temptation ever won them to a denial of the testimony. That one truth was so fixed in their minds that they could never deny it. And each one, as his turn came to meet grim Death, testified to the last that what he had said and affirmed so long was verily true.

The testimonies of the eleven witnesses have never been broken. These testimonies never can be broken. In the wisdom of the Lord the testimonies have been strengthened by the very defections revealed in the lives of the witnesses. By their lives and their testimonies they bear witness, not only to the truth of the "Book of Mormon" and the actuality of the visions that inaugurated the great latter-day work, but also to the truth of their own testimonies. It is really remarkable that the three special witnesses to the "Book of Mormon" became estranged from the Church, and that three of the eight—making six out of eleven—forsook the Church. The testimonies of those who left the Church were made stronger by their apostasy. Had there been delusion or fraud about the restoration, these men would have revealed it. Not one of the witnesses who apostatized was related to Joseph Smith. In their positions as apostates, therefore, they added testimony to their own

testimony, as well as to the divine authority of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Even in the case of the witnesses themselves, it may be re-affirmed with assurance, that, not a single important step in the progress of the restoration was taken without corroborative testimony, or the presence of witnesses.

XXI.

FURTHER WITNESSES TO THE RESTORATION.

The Latter-day Saints lay claim to so much, and there are so many impostures in the world, that it is more than fortunate to have the mission of the American prophet attested, not only by the marvelous results of his works, but also by the words of witnesses. It is asserted by the Latter-day Saints that they, and they alone of all the religious denominations in the world, possess the gospel of the Lord Jesus in its purity and in its fulness. The sects may promulgate small portions of the "law of liberty;" they may teach truth in part. It is not claimed by the Latter-day Saints that they have a monopoly of Truth. Indeed, every sect that survives the vicissitudes of time must possess some of the fabric of truth in its structure. No organization can persist on a foundation of absolute falsehood. But whereas the sectarian creeds present the "power of God unto salvation" in part only, the Mormon creed presents it in full, in its natural simplicity, and not perverted by the doctrines of men.

It is asserted by the Latter-day Saints that they, and they alone of all the religious denominations in the world, possess a correct Church organization, patterned after that of the primitive Church of Christ and the apostles. Other Church organizations retain

parts of the original form. But each one has lost some part or other of the perfect body. One member has wasted away from disuse here and another there, until the process of atrophy has left but few of the original officers and duties of the Church. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, however, has a perfect organization. All the officers of the primitive Church may be found in it, and their several duties are thoroughly understood.

Moreover, it is asserted by the Latter-day Saints, that, not only do they alone possess the Gospel in its fullness and the correct Church organization, but they alone have authority from heaven to officiate in the ordinances and ceremonies of the Church. Other preachers, pastors, and ministers may presume to present themselves as servants of the Most High. But they possess no divine appointment; they have received no ordination by divine authority. The Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ alone are endowed with the divine right to preach the Gospel and to administer in its ordinances.

"Few things about Jesus are more striking or unquestionable than his sense of authority," says a noted theological student.^a To Latter-day Saints this statement is of peculiar interest. They believe that "a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands, by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the

^aProf. Samuel Dickey, "The Significance of the Baptism of Jesus for His Conception of His Ministry," in "Biblical World," June, 1911.

ordinances thereof.”^b A ceremony performed by a man not so called and ordained can be of no authoritative effect. The sense of authority, then, found so strikingly present in the ministry of Jesus, is but the divine appreciation and the divine manifestation of the necessity of authority. “I am not come of myself,”^c He was wont to say; “I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.”^d That appreciation of the necessity of divine authority was so strongly marked in the ministry of Jesus, that He called attention to it even in the sending forth of His apostles. It was not enough that He should be called of God; they, too, must receive the call and be ordained. “Ye have not chosen me,” He said, emphasizing the fact that a man cannot choose of himself to become an apostle of the Lord, “but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit;”^e for “as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.”^f And the apostles in their turn learned so well to understand the principle of divine authority that they challenged the ministry of any man who was not authorized by Jesus. “A man can receive nothing,” explained John the Baptizer when his disciples complained that Jesus drew all men to Him, “except it be given him from heaven.”^g And

^bFifth Article of Faith.

^cJohn 7:28.

^dJohn 5:43.

^eJohn 15:16.

^fJohn 20:21.

^gJohn 3:27.

Paul explained that no man can take the honor of the priesthood to himself, "but he that is called of God as was Aaron."^h

This appreciation of the necessity of divine authority was not peculiar to Jesus and His apostles. Holy men of God have felt it in every age. Only those who have been divinely called have been qualified to speak in the name of the Lord. This statement is as true for the modern Prophet as it is for the prophets of old. For it may be said with truth, that few things about Joseph Smith are more striking or unquestionable than his sense of the necessity of authority. He had seen the Father and the Son in vision; he had been visited repeatedly by an angel of heaven; he had translated a sacred record by the power of God,—yet, he did not presume to promulgate the restored Gospel, or to send others to do so, or to organize a Church. He felt that he had not yet divine authority to do these things. He waited till authority should be given him. Was he an impostor? Had he been so he might easily have assumed authority. He might have proclaimed to the world that he had received authority, and trusted that the world would believe his statement. Certainly, had he been an impostor, he would have called in no man to witness the imposture he was foisting upon the world. What did Joseph Smith do? In the previous chapter, we have learned how the opening visions of the New Dispensation—the revela-

^hHeb. 5:4.

tions that form the foundation stone of the Church—are attested by the testimony of witnesses. It has been said that the Latter-day Saints lay claim to so much, and that there are so many impostures in the world, that it is more than fortunate to have the mission of the American prophet attested, not only by the marvelous results of his work, but also by the words of witnesses. It will be interesting now to recall the way in which Joseph Smith received authority from heaven. It will be interesting further to learn whether or not there were witnesses to the fact. It will not be too much again to assert that not a single important step in the progress of the Restoration was taken without corroborative testimony or the presence of witnesses.

The Prophet Joseph Smith, teaches that there are two divisions of the priesthood of God; and he asserts that he received the authority of both divisions by the direct ministration of heavenly beings. He does more than assert that he received the Holy Priesthood by divine ordination. An impostor might do so much. Joseph Smith describes the manner in which the priesthood was conferred upon him; and he provides a witness who, after many years confirms by his solemn testimony the words of the Prophet. Such a procedure is contrary to the methods of an impostor.

The Aaronic priesthood—the lesser division of the priesthood of God—was restored through the ministration of one heavenly being. It appears that John the Baptizer was the man of presiding author-

ity to hold that division of the priesthood during the dispensation of the Meridian of Time. When it became necessary to restore the Aaronic Priesthood, in the new Gospel dispensation, John the Baptizer came to perform the important ceremony. Joseph Smith relates how this great forerunner of Messiah came down from heaven, and in awe-inspiring words, conferred upon him the Holy Priesthood after the order of Aaron. The relation is plain, ungarlished. There is no comment; there is no argument; there is no embellishment; there is no ecstatic eloquence. It is a matter of fact that has happened, and the Prophet states it in his usual, simple, matter of fact way. The Holy Priesthood after the Order of Aaron had been restored, May fifteenth, 1829.

But the Aaronic priesthood did not endow the Prophet with full authority to establish the Church of Christ, or even to officiate in the higher ordinances of the Church. The authority of the Higher Priesthood was still necessary to the full accomplishment of the mission of the Prophet. That authority was not long in coming. Less than two months after the appearance of John the Baptizer, Peter, James and John appeared on the banks of the Susquehanna river, and conferred upon the Prophet the Priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek. Peter, James, and John constituted the presidency of the primitive Church after the crucifixion of Jesus. They formed the presidency of the Priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek before the dispensation of the fulness of times. When it became necessary

in the new dispensation to restore this Priesthood, Peter, James, and John attended personally to the holy ordinance. Again the narrative is plain and simple. The Prophet, however, comes nearer to ecstatic utterance in speaking of the sublime manifestation than is customary with him. Yet, it is after all a matter-of-fact narration of a matter of fact. The Holy Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek was restored through the ministration of Peter, James, and John.

Can Joseph Smith be believed in these assertions? Fortunately, he was not alone in these two marvelous manifestations, as he had been in those earlier visions that laid the foundation for the superstructure of the Church. When Joseph Smith went into the wood to pray on May fifteenth, 1829, that he might get light on the ordinance of baptism, Oliver Cowdery was with him. When John the Baptizer appeared, it was not Joseph Smith alone who saw him. Oliver Cowdery saw him as well. And when the Baptizer restored officially the Aaronic Priesthood, it was not Joseph Smith alone whom he ordained. Oliver Cowdery received the same ordination with the Prophet. And Oliver Cowdery has described the event in words of power and vividness.

"These were days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the inspiration of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom! Day after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, as he translated with the Urim and Thummim, or as the Nephites would have

said, 'Interpreters,' the history or record called 'The Book of Mormon.'

"To notice, in even few words, the interesting account given by Mormon and his faithful son Moroni, of a people once beloved and favored of heaven, would supersede my present design; I shall therefore defer this to a future period, and, as I said in the introduction, pass more directly to some few incidents immediately connected with the rise of this Church, which may be entertaining to some thousands who have stepped forward amid the frowns of bigots and the calumny of hypocrites, and embraced the Gospel of Christ.

"No men, in their sober senses, could translate and write the directions given to the Nephites from the mouth of the Savior, of the precise manner in which men should build up His Church, and especially when corruption had spread an uncertainty over all forms and systems practiced among men, without desiring a privilege of showing the willingness of the heart by being buried in the liquid grave, to answer a 'good conscience by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.'

"After writing the account given of the Savior's ministry to the remnant of the seed of Jacob, upon this continent, it was easy to be seen, as the prophet said would be, that darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the minds of the people. On reflecting further it was easy to be seen, that amid the great strife and noise concerning religion, none had authority from God to administer the ordinances of

the Gospel. For the question might be asked, have men authority to administer in the name of Christ, who deny revelations, when His testimony is no less than the spirit of prophecy and His religion based, built, and sustained by immediate revelations in all ages of the world when He has had a people on earth? If these facts were buried, and carefully concealed by men whose craft would have been in danger if once permitted to shine in the faces of men. they were no longer to us; and we only waited for the commandment to be given 'Arise and be baptized.'

"This was not long desired before it was realized. The Lord who is rich in mercy, and ever willing to answer the consistent prayer of the humble, after we had called upon Him in a fervent manner, aside from the abodes of men, condescended to manifest to us His will. On a sudden, as from the midst of eternity, the voice of the Redeemer spake peace to us, while the vail was parted and the angel of God came down clothed with glory, and delivered the anxiously looked for message, and the keys of the Gospel of repentance. What joy! what wonder! what amazement! While the world was racked and distracted—while millions were groping as the blind for the wall, and while all men were resting upon uncertainty, as a general mass, our eyes beheld, our ears heard, as in the 'blaze of day;' yes, more—above the glitter of the May sunbeam, which then shed its brilliancy over the face of nature! Then his voice, though mild, pierced to the centre, and his words, 'I am thy fellow-servant,' dispelled every fear. We listened, we

gazed, we admired! 'Twas the voice of an angel from glory, 'twas a message from the Most High! And as we heard we rejoiced, while his love enkindled upon our souls, and we were wrapt in the vision of the Almighty! Where was room for doubt? Nowhere; uncertainty had fled, doubt, had sunk no more to rise, while fiction and deception had fled forever!

"But, dear brother, think, further think for a moment, what joy filled our hearts, and with what surprise we must have bowed, (for who would not have bowed the knee for such a blessing?) when we received under his hand the Holy Priesthood as he said, 'Upon you my fellow-servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer this Priesthood and this authority, which shall remain upon earth, till the sons of Levi may yet offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness!'

"I shall not attempt to paint to you the feelings of this heart, nor the majestic beauty and glory which surrounded us on this occasion; but you will believe me when I say, the earth, nor men, with the eloquence of time, cannot begin to clothe language in as interesting and sublime a manner as this holy personage. No; nor has this earth power to give the joy, to bestow the peace, or comprehend the wisdom which was contained in each sentence as they were delivered by the power of the Holy Spirit! Man may deceive his fellow-man, deception may follow deception, and the children of the wicked one may have power to seduce the foolish and untaught, till

naught but fiction feeds the many, and the fruit of falsehood carries in its current the giddy to the grave; but one touch with the finger of his love, yes, one ray of glory from the upper world, or one word from the mouth of the Savior, from the bosom of eternity strikes it *all* into insignificance, and blots it forever from the mind! The assurance that we were in the presence of an angel; the certainty that we heard the voice of Jesus, and the truth unsullied as it flowed from a pure personage, dictated by the will of God, is to me past description, and I shall ever look upon this expression of the Savior's goodness with wonder and thanksgiving while I am permitted to tarry; and in those mansions where perfection dwells and sin never comes, I hope to adore in that DAY which shall never cease!"ⁱ

This description and fervent testimony was written in 1834. Four years later, however, Oliver Cowdrey was excommunicated from the Church. He left the state where the Church was located, and never again returned to the Saints during the lifetime of the Prophet Joseph Smith. But he remained true to his testimony to the last. There was no doubt in his mind as to the reality of the vision he had beheld. He had felt the hands of the angels upon his head; there was no denying the fact that had taken place. His steadfastness in this testimony included also the ministration of Peter, James, and John.

Oliver Cowdrey returned to the Church at Kanes-

ⁱ"Times and Seasons," p. 201.

ville, Iowa, in 1848. He had been out of the Church for eleven years. On his re-admittance into the Church, he delivered a public discourse, in which he said, "I was present with Joseph when an holy angel from God came down from heaven and conferred on us, or restored, the lesser or Aaronic Priesthood, and said to us, at the same time, that it should remain upon the earth while the earth stands. I was also present with Joseph when the higher or Melchizedek Priesthood was conferred by the holy angels from on high. This Priesthood, we then conferred on each other by the will and commandment of God."^j Less than three months later, under date January thirteenth, 1849, Oliver Cowdery gave a signed statement to Samuel W. Richards. In that statement Cowdery said, "John the Baptist, holding the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood; Peter, James, and John, holding the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood, have also ministered for those who shall be heirs to salvation, and with these administrations ordained men to the same Priesthood. These Priesthoods, with their authority, are now, and must continue to be in the body of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. * * Accept assurances, dear brother, of the unfeigned prayer of him who, in connection with Joseph, the Seer, was blessed with the above administrations."^k

Thus did Oliver Cowdery testify to the last—as he did to the testimony of the Book of Mormon—

^j"History of the Church," Vol. I, p. 41, footnote.

^k"History of the Church," Vol. I, p. 42, footnote.

that he was with the Prophet when the Holy Priesthood was restored, and shared the restoration with him. It is certainly significant that the great manifestations in which John the Baptizer, and the apostles, Peter, James, and John, appeared to restore the Holy Priesthood, did not happen to Joseph Smith alone. A mere impostor would undoubtedly have had them so occur. Oliver Cowdery also received the Aaronic Priesthood. He, too, was ordained an apostle. He became the second elder in the Church—almost a joint president with the Prophet himself. Although he became estranged from the Prophet, he remained true to his testimony; and at the last, he returned to the fold. Not a single important step in the progress of the Restoration was taken without corroborative testimony or the presence of witnesses.¹

¹Since these chapters were written, the following invaluable testimony has appeared in the *Improvement Era*, for March, 1912. The testimony was written by Jacob F. Gates, of Salt Lake City, whose father, Jacob Gates, was in his day a member of the First Council of Seventy:

“My father, Jacob Gates, while on his way to England, in 1849, stopped at the town of Richmond, where lived at that time Oliver Cowdery. Hearing that Oliver was in poor health, and wishing to renew old acquaintance as they had been friends in earlier days, father called on him at his home. Their conversation, during the visit drifted to early Church history, and to their mutual experiences during the troublous times in Missouri and Illinois. Finally father put this question to him: ‘Oliver,’ said he, ‘I want you to tell me the whole truth about your testimony concerning the Book of Mormon—the testimony sent forth to the world over your signature and found in the front of that book. Was your testimony based on a dream, was it the imagination of your mind, was it an illusion, a myth—tell me truthfully?’

The Gospel restored through the ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith was not only for the living, but also for the dead. Those who had passed away

“To question him thus seemed to touch Oliver very deeply. He answered not a word, but arose from his easy chair, went to the book case, took down a Book of Mormon of the first edition, turned to the testimony of the Three Witnesses, and read in the most solemn manner the words to which he had subscribed his name, nearly twenty years before. Facing my father, he said: ‘Jacob, I want you to remember what I say to you. I am a dying man, and what would it profit me to tell you a lie? I know,’ said he, ‘that this Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God. My eyes saw, my ears heard, and my understanding was touched, and I know that whereof I testified is true. It was no dream, no vain imagination of the mind—it was real.’

“Then father asked him about the angel under whose hands he received the Priset hood, to which he made answer thus: “Jacob, I felt the hand of the angel on my head as plainly as I could feel yours, and could hear his voice as I now hear yours.”

“Then father asked this question: ‘If all that you tell me is true, why did you leave the Church?’ Oliver made only this explanation; said he: ‘When I left the Church, I felt wicked, I felt like shedding blood, but I have got all over that now.’

“State of Utah, }
County of Salt Lake, } ss.

“Jacob F. Gates, of Salt Lake City, being first duly sworn, deposes and says that he is a citizen of the United States, of the age of fifty-seven years, and that he is the son of Jacob Gates, who, prior to his death, related to affiant a conversation which he had with Oliver Cowdery, at the town of Richmond, State of Missouri, and that the above and foregoing is a true and correct statement of said conversation as given to him by his father.

“JACOB F. GATES.

“Subscribed and sworn to before me this 30th day of January, 1912.

“ARTHUR WINTER, Notary Public.

“My commission expires December 3, 1915.”

before the Gospel was restored must also have the privilege of obeying it. The first great message of the Angel Moroni to the young Seer, was that the fathers can not be made perfect without the children, nor the children without the fathers. Even after receiving the Holy Priesthood, then, it became necessary further to receive divine commission to promulgate the Gospel among the living—among both Jew and Gentile—and divine authority to officiate vicariously for the dead. Joseph Smith tells in revelation that both commission and authority to perform these duties were conferred in a divine manifestation in Kirtland temple. Moses committed the keys of the gathering of Israel; Elias committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham; and Elijah restored authority to perform vicarious work for the dead. Moreover, Jesus Himself appeared in the holy house, and commended the work of His servant, the Prophet. That these holy men did actually appear and commit the keys of authority to perform special labors, Joseph Smith affirms in all seriousness.^m

Happily, again, Joseph Smith was not alone in receiving these divine manifestations. Oliver Cowdery was once more with him. And once again, Oliver Cowdery bears corroborative testimony. More than that, he was an eyewitness and a partaker of the blessings. He bears direct testimony to the reality of the visions. And as with the Testimony of

^mDoc. and Cov. 110.

Three Witnesses, and the visits of John the Baptizer, and Peter, James, and John, so also now, Oliver Cowdery bears his testimony faithfully to the last. Not a single important step in the progress of the Restoration was taken without corroborative testimony or the presence of witnesses.

The chain of evidence is thus complete. The authority necessary for the promulgation of the Gospel and the establishment of the Church, and all the working principles of the Gospel, have been restored. Every important act of restoration is attested by belief-worthy witnesses. These witnesses are eleven in number, eight of whom are not in any way related to the Prophet. Their testimony has never been impeached. If such an array of evidence and worthy testimony were presented in a federal court, the jury would hardly need to retire for consultation. They might hand in a unanimous verdict at once. Yet, the evidence here presented for the reality of the divine acts of the Restoration is often called into question. The student at school accepts with perfect faith principles of science that he cannot himself demonstrate, and is willing almost to lay down his life in defense of those principles. He is told, for example—for he cannot prove it himself—that there is an attractive or repulsive force operative in the universe, and that that force varies directly as the product of the masses between which it is operating, and inversely as the square of the distance between them. This is the law of gravitation, laid down by Sir Isaac Newton. The student believes it,

as he believes a thousand other principles presented to him in more or less arbitrary fashion. Yet, many of the established principles of science are not half so well authenticated as are the acts of the Restoration of the Gospel in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. In His divine wisdom, the Lord God has wonderfully safeguarded every act in the story of the Restoration, so that there can be no reasonable question as to its reality. Says the Apostle Paul, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."

NOTE:—There is still another important witness to the reality of the revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith. This witness does not testify, however, to the restoration of any authority of the Gospel. Section 76 of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants relates the wonderful vision of glories. Joseph Smith was accompanied in this vision by Sidney Rigdon. Sidney Rigdon was excommunicated Sept. 8, 1844. Like the other witnesses, however, Rigdon remained true to the testimony that he had seen a vision. Sidney Rigdon died out of the Church. His son John W. Rigdon, testifies as follows:—"When I went to father just before his death, and told him that if he knew anything regarding the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, that had not been told, he owed it as a duty to himself and his family, to tell it, he reiterated that he had but one story to tell, and that was the story told him by the Prophet, Joseph Smith, that the records from which the book was taken were engraved on gold plates. Father then testified to me that Joseph was a prophet of God, and that an angel had handed him the plates from which was taken the Book of Mormon" ("Improvement Era," Vol. III, p. 697).

XXII.

THE TEST OF SECTION SIXTY-SEVEN.

Whatever Joseph Smith was or was not, he was certainly fearless in all his assertions of divine inspiration. We have learned that, at a time when high religious excitement proclaimed belief in an immaterial God, and in the actual unity of an immaterial trinity, the boy-prophet declared that he had beheld a vision in which the Father and the Son, had appeared to him, as two separate beings, and as beings of tangible existence in the form of man. Greatly elated over this incomparable vision, the young boy hastened to communicate the things he had learned to a distinguished friend, a sectarian minister; but to his utter astonishment, the boy was ridiculed and called a fool, maligned and persecuted. Yet he had seen a vision, and fearlessly he remained true to that assertion.

Again, not many years after, an angel visited him. Angels were, in Christian theology, however, supernatural beings of a bygone age. No one believed in them when Moroni came to Joseph. Yet, Joseph declared in soberness that an angel had visited him, and had restored the gospel of Christ. And for that fearless assertion, the young man was further persecuted.

Then Joseph published a book in his young man-

hood. He called it the Book of Mormon, and said it was a translation of certain ancient American records, revealed to him by divine power. The world stood aghast at his audacity. It tried to prove the book of spurious workmanship. It tried to prove the book merely a feeble effort of a literary quack. It tried in every way to throw discredit upon the book. But Joseph Smith remained undaunted. The world could not intimidate him, and so it persecuted him.

Then, in his maturity, this remarkable man declared himself to be a prophet of God. He claimed to hold divine communion with the Creator of the world, and issued revelation upon revelation to the Church and to its individual members. Unbelievers laughed in derision; enemies protested indignantly against such blasphemy; and even some followers of the daring prophet began to doubt his inspiration. But intrepid as ever, the prophet maintained that he was divinely called, and fearlessly gave to all the world an infallible test by which his revelations could be tried to the uttermost.

It was in the year 1831. A conference had been convened to consider the advisability of compiling and publishing the numerous revelations—professedly given by God to Joseph Smith—which had hitherto been preserved only in manuscript form. The conference deemed it proper, and even necessary, to publish these revelations; but a discussion arose concerning the language in which they were expressed. Joseph Smith was not a master of elegant English. His education had not trained him in ar-

tistic expression. There were some men in the Church far better educated than the Prophet. They criticized his language, and thought, apparently, that the revelations ought to be revised and couched in a more nearly correct, and certainly a more lofty, style. Then the Prophet again declared that he had received divine direction from God.

“And now I, the Lord,” said the great I Am, “give unto you a testimony of the truth of these commandments which are lying before you. Your eyes have been upon my servant, Joseph Smith, Jr., and his language you have known, and his imperfections you have known; and you have sought in your hearts knowledge that you might express beyond his language; this you also know. Now seek ye out of the book of commandments, even the least that is among them, and appoint him that is the most wise among you; if there be any among you that shall make one like unto it, then ye are justified in saying that ye do not know that they are true; but if ye cannot make one like unto it, ye are under condemnation if ye do not bear record that they are true.”^a

It was a daring revelation to give to a body of enlightened followers. It was even a hazardous thing to throw such a gauntlet before men like Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon and William E. M'Lellin. Think of Joseph Smith—the poor son of an impoverished farmer, who had learned in school little more than to read common print and to write his own

^aDoc. and Cov. 67:4-8.

name—daring. William E. M'Lellin—who had taught school successfully in five states of the Union, and who was noted for a ready flow of good language—to write a single section like the least of the revelations in the book of commandments! Was it unparalleled conceit and presumption that prompted such fearlessness, or was it implicit confidence in the unique quality of the revelations dictated by divine inspiration? Would not so bold a declaration tempt even men of superior wisdom to pit themselves against the reputed man of God? Certainly, one man, at least, was brought low in the dust of humiliation because he presumed to apply the test and write a revelation in the name of the Lord.

“After the foregoing was received,” writes the Prophet, “William E. M'Lellin, as the wisest man, in his own estimation, having more learning than sense, endeavored to write a commandment like unto one of the least of the Lord's, but failed; it was an awful responsibility to write in the name of the Lord. The Elders and all present that witnessed this vain attempt of a man to imitate the language of Jesus Christ, renewed their faith in the fulness of the Gospel, and in the truth of the commandments and revelations which the Lord had given to the Church through my instrumentality; and the Elders signified a willingness to bear testimony to their truth to all the world.”^b

Thus was the test applied in the lifetime of Joseph,

^b“History of the Church.” Vol.

and thus was his declaration of divine inspiration vindicated. No one since the day of William E. M'Lellin has seen fit to make an attempt like his. Yet, the test was not for M'Lellin's day only. When the book of Doctrine and Covenants was finally printed, in 1835, the revelation prescribing the divinely appointed test was included as Section Sixty-seven. And the section has retained its place from that day to this. Not a word has been changed; not one element of the meaning has been altered. As a test, it is just as applicable at present, and just as forceful, as in the time of William E. M'Lellin. Any one who doubts may apply the test today, tomorrow, or at any time; though, some one has very wisely said, "it is a most dangerous thing to do."

As a revelation containing an applicable test, section sixty-seven is, then, of especial interest and value to us. The value is evident and important, even without making an actual application of the test. Let us suppose for a moment that Joseph Smith was never at any time divinely inspired—that he was nothing better than an unscrupulous impostor. It must be conceded then that he was a man of remarkable ability, though his education was limited. The Book of Mormon alone is a monumental work. In all its pages, from the lesser plates of Nephi, from Mormon's abridgment of the greater plates, from the record of Zeniff, from the story of Jared and his brother, and from other interpolated parts, to the end, there is not a single contradiction, not a single absurd doctrine or conclusion. On the other hand, the

book shows a steady growth and development of the story; it reveals a philosophic system of theology; it displays perfect harmony between it and the Holy Bible. Again, in the many revelations contained in the book of Doctrine and Covenants, there are no contradictory statements, there is no obscuration of the doctrine of the Christ, there is no confusion in the duties of officers or members. On the contrary, the book is so clear that the whole Church is built up after its directions. There is no essential point of Church doctrine that was not revealed by Joseph Smith; there is no point of Church organization or discipline that was not provided for by Joseph Smith. Certainly then, if he were an impostor, he must have been a man of clear insight, of remarkable analytical power, of wonderful executive ability.

Now, if an impostor possessed the capability of successfully producing a work so complicated as the Book of Mormon, and of foisting upon the world a system of philosophy so nearly perfect as "Mormonism," and further, of effecting a Church organization far more perfect than that of the German army, —is it credible that he would throw into the face of the world a test of his labors so simple, and yet so infallible, as that contained in section sixty-seven of the Doctrine and Covenants? Consider again the fact that Joseph Smith was an unlettered man, that he had little skill in literary art. Remember further, that many of his followers, in his own day, were far more highly gifted in the way of the world than he.

Would he then dare these men of superior literary ability to write a single revelation equal to the least of his? Remember also that we of today have better educational advantages than even the most favorably situated of Joseph's day. Would then an impostor, so farsighted as Joseph Smith seems to have been, have left on record a challenge for all succeeding generations to write a single revelation equal to the least of his? Would not, rather, an intelligent impostor refrain from calling undue attention to his purported revelations? Would he not certainly exercise the utmost care not to prescribe any test whereby those revelations might be detected as false? And if by chance some foolish test had been allowed to creep into the would-be sacred word, would not the impostor or his friends eagerly seize the first opportunity to expunge that test, and even the whole revelation in which it was contained? Certainly, a man who had planned his work so well as Joseph Smith—were he an impostor—planned his, would not be guilty of so gross an oversight as to leave among his printed revelations so easy a test as that in section sixty-seven.

The conclusion of the whole matter has, of course, been long self-evident. We are grateful to Joseph Smith for fearlessly giving the unbelieving world a test that may be applied to his work at any time. But the fair-minded man will see that an application of the test is unnecessary. The very fearlessness of Joseph's assertion that no uninspired man can write

a revelation equal to the least of his, is evidence of his good faith and of his divine assurance. No mere impostor would dare place so unqualified a challenge before all the world.

XXIII.

THE TESTIMONY OF MARTYRDOM.

Thursday, the twenty-seventh of June, 1844, was a day of gloom for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Less than a quarter of a century had passed since the boy-prophet, Joseph Smith, had seen his first vision in the Sacred Grove. Scarce twenty-one years had passed since the angel, Moroni, had first appeared to him. Only fourteen years had passed since the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had been organized. Yet, during those few years, how much had been accomplished! And during those few years, too, how severe had been the persecution to which the Prophet and his followers had been subjected! Since the day that he had first divulged the fact that he had seen a vision, the Prophet had known hardly a moment of peace. He had been evilly spoken of even by those who had been numbered among his friends. He had been haled before courts of law near half a hundred times on the foresworn oaths of men who themselves should have been condemned by law. He had been thrown vilely into prison, and had endured all the indignities of the common felon. He had been hounded from cover to cover, as the fated stag is hunted by unleashed dogs. His devoted followers had been ruthlessly driven from their homes to

build anew in the wilderness and in the desert. Always, however, the courts had been forced to admit, that, while the Prophet and his friends were compelled to pay much more than a reasonable penalty for the offenses of which they were accused, yet they were in every case perforce dismissed as innocent. Not a single charge could be sustained against them. But now, at last, the malignant hatred of his enemies prevailed against the Prophet. On Thursday, the twenty-seventh of June, 1844, the Prophet Joseph Smith, and his brother, the patriarch, Hyrum Smith, were brutally mobbed and shot to death, in the upper room of the old jail, at Carthage, Illinois.

No more flagrant act of mob-violence can be shown in the history of the modern religious world than this which brought Joseph Smith to a brutal and untimely death. It would not be appropriate, however, to take up here a detailed, critical study of the events that led up to the martyrdom. We need to know the sad story only in its outlines. On Friday, the seventh of June, 1844, there appeared in Nauvoo the first and only number of a weekly periodical called the *Nauvoo Expositor*. The *Expositor* had been founded, according to its own prospectus,^a for the avowed purpose, amongst others, of advocating, through its columns, "the unconditional repeal of the Nauvoo city charter," and of instigating the people of Nauvoo and adjacent parts to unite in persecuting the Prophet Joseph Smith and his

^a"History of the Church," vol. VI., pp. 443, 444.

friends. The first and only number of the *Nauvoo Expositor* was true to the promises of the prospectus.

It is needless to say that the people of Nauvoo resented the vicious slanders published in the *Expositor*. They resented, moreover, the unrighteous purposes for which it was founded. The matter of this new periodical, the *Nauvoo Expositor*, was brought to the attention of the city council of Nauvoo. After several days' careful investigation, the council passed an ordinance declaring the *Nauvoo Expositor* a nuisance, and issued an order to the mayor, Joseph Smith, to have the nuisance abated. On the night of Monday, June tenth, 1844, the city marshal, accompanied by the major-general of the Nauvoo Legion and the members of the Legion, carried the press, the type, the printed paper, and the fixtures of the *Nauvoo Expositor*, into the street and destroyed them.

This summary action of the city council of Nauvoo against the *Nauvoo Expositor* was the beginning of the final trouble that led to the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith. There was raised such a hue and cry by the apostate publishers of the short-lived *Nauvoo Expositor*, that the whole state of Illinois was roused to attention. Mass-meetings were held in which the action of the city council of Nauvoo was denounced. Joseph Smith was arrested for riot. His case was heard before a non-Mormon justice. On June twelfth, he was acquitted. But the enemies of the Prophet had become thoroughly aroused. They banded themselves to-

gether, and determined to do him to death. He was arrested a second time for the *Expositor* affair, and was again acquitted. But the disturbance continued to grow worse. The spirit of mobocracy took possession of the defamers of the Prophet. They began to clamor for his blood, and for the blood of those that should dare to remain loyal to him. Their frenzy had grown to such uncontrollable proportions that nothing short of the shedding of blood could satisfy them. The *Nauvoo Expositor*, though dead, was bringing to pass the very results for which it was first given life.

It was with the affair reduced thus to utter hopelessness, that the Prophet decided finally to try to save the situation by taking himself away from the seat of trouble. It was the evening of Saturday, June twenty-second, 1844. The Prophet had met with several men in an upper room of his house. The subject of discussion was naturally the serious difficulties that had grown out of the destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor*—an act that had been twice justified by properly constituted courts of law.

"Brethren," said the Prophet, "here is a letter from the Governor which I wish to have read."

The letter was read.

Then the Prophet spoke again, sorrowfully, "There is no mercy—no mercy here."

"No," replied his brother Hyrum; "Just as sure as we fall into their hands we are dead men."

"Yes," said Joseph; "what shall we do, Brother Hyrum?"

And Hyrum answered, "I don't know."

Then suddenly, with the light of inspiration brightening his countenance, the Prophet exclaimed, "The way is open. It is clear to my mind what to do. All they want is Hyrum and myself; then tell everybody to go about their business, and not to collect in groups, but to scatter about. There is no doubt they will come here and search for us. Let them search; they will not harm you in person or property, and not even a hair of your head. We will cross the river tonight, and go away to the West."

The plan seemed to be good. It was accepted by the men assembled. The Prophet gave several instructions for carrying the plan into effect. Then he recorded, as the last words in his own simple, direct narrative of his life these words: "I told Stephen Markham that if I and Hyrum were ever taken again we should be massacred, or I was not a prophet of God. I want Hyrum to live to avenge my blood, but he is determined not to leave me."^b

With this complete appreciation of the seriousness of the situation, and with this sentence of death passed upon his own head, in case he should ever again be taken by the mob, Joseph Smith set out with his brother, Hyrum, for the Rocky Mountains.^c Had

^b"History of the Church," vol. VI., pp. 545, 546.

^c"History of the Church," vol. VI., p. 547. The thought of going to the Rocky Mountains was not a new one with the Prophet Joseph Smith. Nearly two years before this, in August, 1842, he made the following entry in his journal:—"I prophesied [at Montrose, Iowa, while conversing with

he been permitted to go he might possibly have lived many years more to bless his people. But undoubtedly his day's work was done. He was called now to bear testimony to his great life-work with his blood. Joseph and Hyrum, with a few friends, had proceeded only as far as Montrose, Iowa, when messengers reached them from the wife of the Prophet. The people had become alarmed in the absence of their leader. They entreated him to return to them. They expressed their fears that if he did not return to Nauvoo—and, of course, to imprisonment—the city would be guarded by troops till he was found, “if it took three years to do it.” Several of the brethren assembled at Montrose joined, too, in the plea that he should return. They accused him of cowardice, saying that it was now as in the fable: when the wolves came the shepherd fled from the flock, and left the sheep to be devoured.

The Prophet, it need not be said, was sorely hurt. “If my life is of no value to my friends,” said he, “it is of none to myself.”

several brethren] that the saints would continue to suffer much affliction and would be driven to the Rocky Mountains, many would apostatize, others would be put to death by our persecutors, or lose their lives in consequence of exposure or disease; and some of you will live to go and assist in making settlements, and build cities and see the saints become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains.” In February and March, 1844, a company was actually organized to explore the Rocky Mountain region, and Congress was memorialized to assist in the exploration of the West. When, a few months later, it became necessary for the Prophet to seek a place of refuge, it was but natural that he should turn his eyes in the direction of his great prediction.

Thereupon he turned to Porter Rockwell, and asked, "What shall I do?"

Rockwell answered, "You are the oldest, and ought to know best; and as you make your bed, I will lie with you."

Still perturbed in mind, the Prophet turned to Hyrum and asked, "Brother Hyrum, you are the oldest, what shall we do?"

And Hyrum counseled, "Let us go back and give ourselves up, and see the thing out."

It was a serious step to take. This was a question of life and death. The Prophet considered the counsel awhile, then said, "If you go back I will go with you, but we shall be butchered."

"No, no," cried Hyrum; "let us go back and put our trust in God, and we shall not be harmed. The Lord is in it. If we live or have to die, we will be reconciled to our fate."

These were brave words. They revealed the fearless heart of the trustful man of God. But Joseph was not deceived. He knew that if he returned to Nauvoo, he should be slain. Yet, after considering the question again for awhile, he turned to Reynolds Cahoon and instructed him to have a boat ready that evening to take them back over the river. The Prophet had decided to return to his fate.

Perhaps nothing is more striking in the events of the next few days than the Prophet's foreknowledge that he was going to a violent death. On the way from Montrose to the river he fell behind the company with Porter Rockwell. Those in advance

shouted to them to hurry. But Joseph answered, "It is of no use to hurry, for we are going back to be slaughtered." At five-thirty the company re-crossed the river and entered again the city of Nauvoo.

Early on Monday, June twenty-fourth, the Prophet and his company started for Carthage, Illinois. When the company reached the Nauvoo Temple, the Prophet paused. He looked with admiration at the Temple, then at the city of Nauvoo, the Beautiful, nestling in the bend of the river below them. The beautiful morning view seemed to affect him. He became again oppressed with the foreknowledge of certain death. "This is the loveliest place and the best people under the heavens," he cried; "little do they know the trials that await them." And as the company passed out of the city limits, the Prophet called on Daniel H. Wells. "Squire Wells," said the Prophet, on parting, "I wish you to cherish my memory, and not think me the worst man in the world either." Four miles west of Carthage, the Prophet's company met Captain Dunn, who had been sent to take possession of the arms of the Nauvoo Legion, with sixty mounted militia. Some of the Prophet's associates seemed to become alarmed at the sight of the soldiers. But Joseph quieted their fears with the rather doubtful comfort, "Do not be alarmed, brethren, for they cannot do more to you than the enemies of truth did to the ancient Saints—they can only kill the body." And only a few moments later, he made the

startling statement, "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter, but I am calm as a summer's morning. I have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward all men. If they take my life, I shall die an innocent man, and my blood shall cry from the ground for vengeance, and it shall be said of me, 'He was murdered in cold blood!'"^d

And that there was real cause for anxiety was proved by the testimony of Abram C. Hodge. While the arms of the Nauvoo Legion were being collected at Nauvoo for Capt. Dunn, Hodge had been sent to Carthage by Hyrum Smith, to learn what was the situation there. At Carthage, Hodge met a Rev. Mr. Dodge, a friend of Hyrum's. He warned Hodge that if Joseph and Hyrum came to Carthage they would be killed. Hodge also met Hamilton, the innkeeper, who pointed out the Carthage Greys and said, "Hodge, there are the boys that will settle you Mormons." Returning from Carthage, Hodge met the Prophet and his friends. Hodge reported what he had heard at Carthage, and said, "Brother Hyrum, you are now clear, and if it was my duty to counsel you, I would say, do not go another foot, for they say they will kill you, if you go to Carthage."

But Hyrum and Joseph were both possessed of a splendid courage. There was only one thing now to do to save Nauvoo from massacre by a lawless mob. The Prophet and his brother continued fearlessly on their way to Carthage—into the very arms

^d"History of the Church," Vol. VI., p. 555.

of death. Indeed, perhaps equally striking with the Prophet's foreknowledge of certain death was his unflinching courage in facing that death. It was just a little before midnight, on the twenty-fourth of June, that the company reached Carthage, and put up at Hamilton's tavern. The temper of the mob-militia assembled at Carthage was displayed by the outcries of the Carthage Greys and the general mob while the Prophet and his friends were passing the public square.

"Where is the damned prophet?"

"Stand away, you McDonough boys, and let us shoot the damned Mormons."

"Clear the way and let us have a view of Joe Smith, the prophet of God. He has seen the last of Nauvoo. We'll use him up now, and kill all the damned Mormons."

If the mob had hoped to daunt the noble spirit of the Prophet by this manifestation of insatiable, bloodthirsty hatred, they were sorely disappointed. Joseph Smith continued calmly, fearlessly on his way. He knew that he was going like a lamb to the slaughter; but his spirit was, as he had said, calm as a summer's morning. There was no thought of fear in his heart. There was no thought of wavering there. He had set his hand to the plow; he did not look back.

It is needless to follow in detail the shameful proceedings of the next few days at Carthage. Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith were again arrested on a

charge based on the destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor*. They were violently dragged to prison by the Carthage Greys, without examination, on an illegal *mittimus* prepared by Justice Robert F. Smith. The next day they were dragged forth from the jail, again by the Carthage Greys, though the *mittimus* had ordered that they should remain imprisoned "until released by due course of law." And again, without examination, they were returned to the jail and thrust into close confinement. There was no attempt at a fair, legal trial. On the contrary, every effort was made to pervert the courts, to detain the witnesses for the defense, to delay proper proceedings, and otherwise to divert the course of justice. The mob leaders declared openly, "The law is too short for these men, but they must not be suffered to go at large"—"if the law will not reach them, powder and ball must." In short, Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum Smith, were overcome finally, not by the just decisions of a properly constituted court of law, but by the bloodthirsty passion of an infuriated mob. As with the lowly Nazarene, so with the humble American Prophet, the law would have washed its hands of the case, for it found in the Prophet an innocent man void of offense; but the lawless, passion-ruled mob would not have it so. They set aside the decisions of the courts. They revolted from the mild governance of the chief executive of the state. The final scene in the drama of the Restoration is a scene of mob-violence and murder. It occurred not long before

sun-down on the eventful twenty-seventh of June, 1844. True to the threats that had been uttered; true to the determination that had been formed; true to the bitter, though unjust, hatred that had been aroused against the Prophet,—a mob of frenzied, lawless men rushed upon Carthage jail to fulfil their predictions of violence. When they fled precipitately into the woods a few minutes later, terrified by the grossness of their own brutality, they had accomplished their murderous resolve. The Prophet, Joseph Smith, and the Patriarch, Hyrum Smith, lay dead.

Three points are clearly manifest: first, the Prophet and the Patriarch were brutally mobbed, and murdered, without justifiable cause; second, the Prophet foreknew, by the spirit of inspiration, that he was going to a violent death; third, in the face of the violent death which he knew to be coming to him, the Prophet displayed a never-failing fearlessness—a complete reliance upon the righteousness of his cause. While his sworn enemies were seeking to destroy him, he was himself giving proof, by his humility and his uprightness, by his courage and his manliness, and by his unswerving devotion to his trust, that he was far and away removed from guilt, and that he was indeed a prophet of the living God. Before he was committed to prison, several of the officers of the troops at Carthage, curious to see the Prophet, visited him in his room at the inn. The Prophet asked them if they could detect anything in his appearance that would indicate that he was

so desperate a character as his defamers represented him to be.

The visitors replied, "No, sir; your appearance would indicate the very contrary, General Smith, but we cannot see what is in your heart, neither can we tell what are your intentions."

"Very true, gentlement," returned the Prophet, "you cannot see what is in my heart, and you are therefore unable to judge me or my intentions; but I can see what is in your hearts, and will tell you what I see. I can see that you thirst for blood, and nothing but my blood will satisfy you. It is not for crime of any description that I and my brethren are thus continually persecuted and harassed by our enemies, but there are other motives, and some of them I have expressed, so far as relates to myself; and inasmuch as you and the people thirst for blood, I prophesy, in the name of the Lord, that you shall witness scenes of blood and sorrow to your entire satisfaction. Your souls shall be perfectly satiated with blood, and many of you who are now present shall have an opportunity to face the cannon's mouth from sources you think not of; and those people that desire this great evil upon me and my brethren, shall be filled with regret and sorrow because of the scenes of desolation and distress that await them. They shall seek for peace, and shall not be able to find it. Gentlemen, you shall find what I have told you to be true."^e

^e"History of the Church," vol. VI, p. 566.

The events of the next two days proved that the Prophet's declaration of what was in the hearts of his visitors was right. And the visitors had not long to live after the martyrdom of the Prophet to see a terrible fulfillment of all that he had predicted in the name of the Lord. The hearts of many of them were rent at the scenes of distress, of desolation, and of blood, that they witnessed before they were themselves taken away.

At the prison, the Prophet and his friends manifested the same fearless spirit, the same degree of divine inspiration, and the same devotion to the cause of Truth. Joseph Smith, and Hyrum Smith, and their associates, took turns preaching to the guards. These noble men explained to their keepers the true nature of their missions upon earth, and bore irrefragable testimonies to the truth of the Gospel that they preached. Now, the guards were themselves poisoned by bigotry, by prejudice, by bitter hatred. Many of them belonged to the mob-militia that was sworn to murder the Prophet. Yet, some of them were so affected by the preaching of the prisoners that they asked to be relieved before their watch was out. Many of them admitted freely that they had been imposed upon. Frequently, one of them was heard to call to the others, "Let us go home, boys, for I will not fight any longer against these men." So evident was the innocence of the prisoners, that, had they been given a fair, legal trial, the court would have acquitted them without question, and would have given them, moreover, the full protec-

tion of the law. It was the knowledge of this fact that led the Prophet's persecutors to say, "If the law will not reach them powder and ball must."

During the last night in Carthage jail, the brethren testified again of the divinity of their missions. There were present in the prison that night Willard Richards, John Taylor, John S. Fullmer, Stephen Markham, Dan Jones, Hyrum Smith, and Joseph Smith. Elder John Taylor prayed. After the prayer, Patriarch Hyrum Smith read from the "Book of Mormon." He selected certain passages relating cases of imprisonment of the servants of God for the Gospel's sake, and telling how they were miraculously delivered. Evidently, Hyrum still entertained hope that he and his brother would be delivered from their enemies. When Hyrum had finished his comments on the passages he had read, the Prophet himself addressed his friends and the guards. This address in Carthage jail was in the nature of a sermon—the last sermon delivered by the Prophet in mortal life. He bore a powerful testimony to the divine authenticity of the "Book of Mormon." He testified to the actuality of the restoration of the Gospel, with all its authorities and blessings. He affirmed solemnly that the restoration of the Gospel had been effected through the ministration of angels. He declared that the kingdom of God was again established upon the earth. He claimed that it was for the Gospel's sake that he was imprisoned, and not because he had violated any law either of God or of man. Thus devotedly, fear-

lessly, did the great Prophet, with the certain foreknowledge of death in his heart, testify to the divinity of his mission to earth.

On the day that he was foully murdered, it was reported to the Prophet that the mob had solemnly determined to kill him before sundown. He retained, however, his serene composure. Above all, he remained to the last true to the trust God had reposed in him. It did not once occur to him that he could save his own life by denying his claims to divine inspiration. On the contrary, on this last day of their life upon earth, with the certainty of death apparent undoubtedly to both of them, "Joseph and Hyrum bore a faithful testimony to the Latter-day work, and the coming forth of the 'Book of Mormon,' and prophesied of the triumph of the Gospel over all the earth, exhorting the brethren present to faithfulness and persevering diligence in proclaiming the Gospel, building up the Temple, and performing all the duties connected with our holy religion."^f Almost with his dying breath the Prophet testified to the truth. And when he fell, it was with a cry to his God, who had appointed him to labor and to suffer.

It was undoubtedly in the wise economy of God that Joseph Smith was called upon to sacrifice his life. The Prophet was tried to the uttermost. Let us suppose again for a moment that Joseph Smith was an imposter—that he was trying to foist upon

^f"History of the Church," vol. VI., p. 610.

the world a monstrous fraud. Undoubtedly he would have been willing to endure much for the success of his undertaking. He might have yielded willingly to imprisonment, and might have paid gracefully any penalty, short of death, imposed by courts of law. But it is only fair to assume that life would have been as dear to him as to anyone else. It is not probable that he would have laid down his life for a mere imposture. It is not probable that he would have been willing to make so rich a sacrifice, had it been possible for him to recant—to deny what was an untruth anyway. More probably, if he had been an imposter, Joseph Smith would have saved his life, at the last, by avowing the imposture he had attempted to establish. But Joseph Smith did not deny his divine, prophetic calling. On the contrary, in the very presence of death, he testified to the divinity of the great latter-day work which he had inaugurated. Neither death nor the fear of death could break the assertion he had made many years before, “I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it.” This fact forms another link in the chain of cumulative evidence. It does not prove that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God; but it does prove that he was sincere, that he was no mere imposter. Added to what has gone before, it strengthens the evidence that there was something more than earthly inspiration in the life-work of Joseph Smith.

Moreover, through the martyrdom of Joseph

Smith, the world is left without excuse. If the Prophet's mission had run smoothly; if there had been no opposition; if there had been no persecution; if there had been no imprisonments; if there had been finally no martyrdom,—then the world might have justly derided the claims of the Prophet. He could then never have been tried; his own conviction of his divinely appointed mission could never have been tested. It could not then have been known how the fervent testimonies of either the Prophet or his followers would have withstood trial and tribulation. But the mission of the Prophet did not run smoothly. Opposition began immediately when he revealed the fact of the first vision, and followed him to his death. Malignation and persecution pursued him relentlessly. Mobs wreaked vengeance upon him for his Godliness, in acts of violence. Perjured judges committed him to prison, not for any criminal act, but for testifying of the Lord Jesus. Finally, he sacrificed his life, not for any offense small or great against the law of the land, but for being a prophet of the living God. He sealed his testimony with his blood. Is there left to the world any excuse for not accepting his testimony?

It appears then, that, throughout the terrible strain of those last days of his life, Joseph Smith had a strange foreknowledge of the coming martyrdom. Throughout those days, he faced fearlessly the death he knew to be awaiting him. In the presence of that violent death, he bore an unwavering testimony to the divine authority of the Church he

had been appointed by God to establish. He saw the chief executive of the state of Illinois become faithless to his pledge of protection. He saw the mob rush upon the prison where he was lodged. He saw his devoted brother, Hyrum, fall dead before him. He knew what death was. He knew that he had no power against it—unless it were to declare himself an imposter and to deny his divine calling. This he could not do. Through all the years his testimony had not been broken. It was not broken now even by the fear of death. Could *he* have been an imposter?

No!

The fame of him has spread the world over. His followers are numbered by the hundreds of thousands. Everywhere he is spoken of for good or for ill. Gradually his friends are increasing. The good that is said of him is growing; the evil is diminishing. Already many declare that he was murdered in cold blood. The evidence of his great life-work is fast establishing him in the hearts of men as a true Prophet of God.

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